THE NICK HOKE EXPERIENCE

POLICING EDITION

1993-2020



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PART I:

27 YEARS A COP

SUMMARIZED



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I started my police career in 1993, when I was all of 25 years old. I gave the next 27 years of my younger life to the pursuit of justice and crunching crime. I saw some things, did some things. Most of them are summarized in very general terms here. If you're thinking about getting into law enforcement and want more information, you can read this and think it over. And if at the end you still think it's your noble destiny, I'd recommend you go find a mental health professional to diagnose what's wrong with you. For all you others who just want a peek into what was my world and life, here ya go. With plenty of colorful and exciting pictures for you visual learners.



Before I begin, I want to emphasize that my personal policing experiences were not exceptional, special, or above average in any way, shape, or form, and I make no claims to have had any extraordinary events that would impress any other cops anywhere. Indeed, any big city cop with a comparable number of years of experience would have me beat considerably in any and every category. Although I've written this all in a first-person narrative, this is really a tribute to all of my brother and sister officers, everywhere. Some see themselves as guardians, some are warriors; all are peacekeepers and public servants. If you know a cop, or if you are a cop, these pages are as much about them (or you) as they are about me.



My career was typical for a small town cop in my day and age, and not super-duper exciting most of the time. But to shed a little modesty, looking back on what I've written here I do have to admit that I definitely beat out a lot of other working folks in terms of job excitement. Which is not to say that I think I was "better" in any way than say, a bus driver, or a store cashier, or an assembly line worker, or a baker, but if we challenged one of them to compile their career experiences like I have here…well, it's a safe bet that my stories are probably more interesting. Although I certainly can't compare to fire fighters or ER doctors or nurses or career special forces guys. All of those folks have seen tons more craziness than me.

This written torrent of randomness took me a ridiculous number of hours to try and arrange into any sort of coherence and even now after innumerable revisions and edits, it would certainly cause my former English teachers to cringe and shake their heads and maybe weep a bit at the innumerable typos, and deviant sentence structures. But nobody is paying me to do this, and you're not out any money buying this, so you get what you pay for and this will be a non-refundable reading experience. Presented to you free from commercial interruption, even.



Most of my career I was a just regular old patrol officer, but over the years I did have a few collateral duties and specialty assignments that gave me the opportunity to take on other challenges. I was a DARE Instructor for 5 years, and then a School Resource Officer for 5 years. Concurrently I was a Crime Prevention Officer for almost 10 years during which time I started up and managed the Poulsbo Police Department's Citizen Volunteer Program. I was also a Field Training Officer for new officers, a Reserve Officer Program Coordinator for the volunteer officers, and a Narcotic Detection K9 Handler. I was in charge of the property and evidence room for a couple of years, I did occasional court bailiff duty, I did bicycle patrol, boat patrol, and I drove a wide variety of police vehicles. In my 27 years of wearing a uniform and a badge and a gun belt, I worked for three mayors and six different police chiefs and I saw a lot of coworkers come and go in a wide variety of means and circumstances.



During my career as a professional problem-solver and uniformed crime fighter I met thousands and thousands of interesting people doing a lot of interesting things. I met a lot of stupid people who had done really stupid things and I met a lot of very smart people who had also done.. really.. stupid things.



I met a lot of victims, and witnesses, and bystanders, and perpetrators and suspects including but not limited to: accomplices, activists, addicts, advocates, alcoholics, anarchists, anti-government militia members, anti-government sovereign citizens, arsonists, bounty hunters, bums, burglars, constitutionalists, crack whores, creeps, cutters, child molesters, collaborators, con artists, cop shop groupies, creeps, cross dressers, counterfeiters, decoys, demonstrators, deserters, destitutes, desperados, deviants, dopers, drifters, dropouts, dumpster divers, embezzlers, escapees, ex-cons, exhibitionists, foreigners, forgers, fugitives, gamblers, geocachers, hitchhikers, hoarders, hoaxers, hobos, hookers, impersonators, imposters, juvenile delinquents, junkies, kidnappers, kleptomaniacs, litterers, looters, lurkers, misogynists, molesters, murderers, outlaw bikers, panhandlers, peddlers, pedophiles, perjurers, perverts, picketers, pilferers, porch pirates, prostitutes, protestors, proselytizers, prowlers, anti-protestor protestors, poachers, politicians, purse snatchers, rapists, recanters, recidivists, rioters, road ragers, robbers, runaways, scammers, scofflaws, skaters, snowflakes, solicitors, scavengers, squatters, stalkers, streakers, smugglers, signature gatherers, shoplifters, social justice warriors, swindlers, taggers, thieves, thugs, trespassers, translators, transvestites, tree cutters, tree huggers, tweakers, undocumented immigrants, uniformed neo-Nazis, vandals, vagabonds, vagrants, voyeurs, white supremacists, wire thieves, and parent-child shoplifting teams of all ages.



I had a lot of clients who were crazy, which is an understatement on both counts. I dealt with people suffering from all kinds of mental breakdowns and illnesses and psychotic breaks and neurological disorders and deficits and brain damage; sometimes I met several a month, sometimes several a week. Or several in one day, on occasion when the stars were aligned and the moon was full.



Over the years I encountered literally hundreds and hundreds of people who were all kinds of anti-social, bi-polar, paranoid, schizophrenic, psychotic, depressed, disturbed, defiant, distraught, disoriented, dissociative, delusional, hysterical, catatonic, manic, suicidal and homicidal. Their altered mental states were caused by a wide variety of things: drugs, alcohol, brain injuries, bad genes, and medications. I met people with personality disorders, developmental disorders, autism, Asperger's, Alzheimer's, and plain old retarded folks. I worked with (or tried to work with) people suffering from altered perceptions of reality, people who were hallucinating, or in excited delirium states. Some were court-certified criminally insane and some of the mentally disturbed folks were even highly educated professionals; pilots, lawyers, authors, and doctors.





A lot of times they were not just crazy but also completely whacked out on drugs or alcohol, or both, and sometimes they were also foreigners with no English speaking skills, just to make things really interesting. Some were lifelong crazy and some got there suddenly with no warning and sometimes I was the first one to meet their new scary personas. I took a lot of them to the hospital emergency room for psychiatric evaluations. The compliant ones went voluntarily in the back seat of a police car. The non-compliant ones were strapped down on gurneys and taken by ambulance. The combative ones were drugged with forced intranasal sprays that put them into a drooling stuporous state of cooperation. Some of my clients graduated on to state mental institutions and they did not come back. Others had unfortunately actually just returned from those places. Some crazy people knew that they were mentally ill; they were the easiest ones to work with. Those were also the rare ones. Unfortunately, most of the crazy folks I met did not know that they were mentally ill. Sometimes I tried telling them about the reality that they actually lived in but my conversion and success rate was miserably low.



I met a lot of injured people. Injuries like contusions, concussions, lacerations, fractures, punctures, and crushings. I saw a lot of bloody people. Bloody dead people, bloody live people, and bloody live people who were dying. I saw blood in cars, ambulances, police cars, blood in pools and in thick puddles on the ground, blood soaked through clothing, blood under bodies, and blood pouring from people's heads and faces. I saw people with teeth knocked out, hair pulled out, broken noses, cut with knives, hit with bottles, hit with boards, hit with cars, stabbed, broken bones, punched and slapped and smacked and shot and run over. I saw too many people vomit in my presence and I met more than a few folks with poop on them, some dead, some alive; some knew it, some didn't. I've picked up more broken body parts than I ever wanted to, that includes pieces of skull, teeth, a finger…and no that was not all from the same scene those were different times and places and victims.





I investigated dozens of death scenes. I saw dead bodies in bathrooms, in bathtubs, on beds, in tents, on couches, on floors, behind furniture, in cars, and under cars. Face up, face down, some lying flat, some scrunched upside down jammed behind furniture, some with clothes, some without clothes, some of them were dead peacefully, but some died with a lot of sudden violent messy trauma. Some in public, some in private. Some of them died instantly, some died slowly. There were expected deaths from illness, disease and old age and unexpected deaths from accidents and motor vehicle collisions. Dead bodies in full rigor stiff as a board and dead bodies limp and floppy and soggy. I saw more than one old timer Norwegian who had shuffled his mortal coil while napping in his favorite recliner, which I think is the best way to go. I saw dead people cut open at autopsies. I saw dead bodies bloated and fermenting and discolored and covered with flies on top and maggots underneath with bubbling sloughing skin and I saw freshly dead bodies still warm and wet with body fluids. Fresh or stale, none of them had a good color. Some smelled only slightly bad. Most smelled terrible. Some smelled so horrible that when I opened the front door the giant black overfed flies couldn't escape outside fast enough. Once I saw a whole brain that had been completely shotgunned and blown out of a skull and had landed several feet away…totally intact. I saw people dead because of their own actions; sometimes intentional and sometimes not, and I saw a lot of dead people who were dead because of somebody else's actions. Most probably didn't deserve it but they just had the great misfortune of getting stuck in the grim reaper's sights at that time and place. I do not like touching dead people and virtually every single dead person I saw was, in a word, gross. Some of the dead people I met were people whom I had personally known before they were dead. I've stepped over a few dead bodies, and one time I did pry a gun out of a man's cold dead fingers.



A lot of my dead clients were suicides. I saw teen suicides, elderly suicides, middle aged suicides, and every age range in between. I saw successful ones and failed attempts, and I even interrupted a few attempts before they could become successful. Suicides by alcohol, suicide by pistol, suicide by shotgun, suicide by rifle, suicide by cyanide even. Suicide by car grills, pills, car exhaust, knives, smoking, drinking, nooses, self-defenestration, and other creative methods. Some suicides were planned out years in advance. A shocking too many were very impulsive. I read a variety of suicide notes and letters left behind. Most were not very coherent or articulate but a few were.



I handled suicide implements and weapons and I dealt with the upset friends and family members who found the deceased bodies of their loved ones. I delivered death notifications. And I saw a lot of distressed people have to make very difficult and quick life or death decisions about how much effort should be made to resuscitate their dying family members, suddenly collapsed on the kitchen floor or back porch or living room or lawn. I kept spouses calm and distracted while paramedics tried to save their husbands and wives with CPR and cardiac defibrillation, which was in reality never as successful as seen on TV. I also met a lot of folks who had suddenly found themselves in states of sudden and complete shock; some were aware of it, most weren't.



Continuing in the category of seeing stunned people having to make very difficult decisions quickly, I met a few handcuffed drug dealers in their houses, sitting on a chair while their world crumbles down around them with state and federal agents tearing their place apart uncovering hidden guns, cash, and large quantities of drugs, and the dealers are suddenly looking at 10 or 20 or 30 years in prison, or maybe a few less..? if they quickly choose to cooperate and become a confidential informant against their friends, or their dealers, or even cartels.



I dealt with drug users, drug addicts, drug dealers, drug smugglers, and confidential informants. I saw a lot of drug deals gone bad. I saw too many young adults melt their brains into goo because they got into the habit of intentionally inhaling chemical fumes, like cans of compressed air. Or gasoline. Over the course of my career I saw a lot of drug addicts overdose, usually on heroin. Most were young adults in their early 20's who could not plan or even envision their lives more than about 3 days into the future. Some were carried away in medic units to the hospital but more than a few were carried away in plain white vans to the morgue. I knew one young man who had overdosed on heroin and been resuscitated more times – and this is not an exaggeration - than he had birthdays. And I knew some criminals who got arrested and booked into the local jail at the average rate of once every 3 months, every year.. for their entire adult lives.

Out on the streets I played the name game with a lot of criminals when they decided they suddenly wanted to have a different identity and not reveal their own real names. When we weren't sure of their names we'd take them to jail, where their fingerprints (invariably already in the system) would correctly identify them.



In the narcotics category I seized and confiscated all kinds of illegal and recreational drugs including marijuana, heroin, opiates, methamphetamine, cocaine, crack, LSD, MDMA, and prescription pills of every shape size color and flavor. I field tested a lot of suspected substances to confirm what kind of drugs they were. I helped bust marijuana grow operations and meth labs. I confiscated drug dealers' money and cars used to commit felonious crimes. I found lost drugs and had citizens turn in found drugs to me. I caught a lot of people who had altered and forged drug prescriptions; some of them I caught waiting at the pharmacy counter while the pharmacists stalled them. I seized and confiscated contraband and drug paraphernalia of all different kinds and learned the hard way the importance of emptying full sloshing large used water bongs before transporting them in the trunk of my patrol car. I destroyed tens of thousands of dollars' worth of drugs by fire, or pouring down storm drains, or flushing in toilets. I learned it is actually very hard to flush marijuana because it tends to float really well.



I handed out thousands and thousands of shiny blue and silver "JUNIOR POLICE" stickers to kids of all ages in the schools, and especially at parades and festivals. High school kids especially liked them. And buzzed adults on beer run/pub crawl events.



As a patrol officer, I had to respond to a lot of false alarms. Literally hundreds of them. Only a very few alarm activations were actually caused by real burglars. I also had to respond to countless 911 hang up calls. Most were misdials or malfunctioning phone equipment but every once in a while I'd find real trouble at the other end; a medical emergency or a crime victim who seriously needed help and only had enough time to dial 911 before being interrupted by something or someone.



The 911 operators filtered out most of the prank calls but I still had to respond to a few unknown problems, like the time an old lady called for 911 for help and it turned out she was just out of cigarettes and very upset about it.



I was in lot of foot chases and car chases and high speed and low speed vehicle pursuits. I stalked and hunted and chased for fugitives in buildings, in parking lots, and in the woods. I chased people through parks and schools, trails, streets, in buildings, in parking lots, across highways, and in and through houses. I climbed onto a few roofs and I jumped over a lot of fences, and navigated rooftops and catwalks. Sometimes I was alone, sometimes with a dozen or more other officers in big manhunts.



I caught a lot of bad guys but there were plenty – too many - who ran or sped and evaded away and escaped clean; some by mere minutes, seconds or feet. But some I did catch when I was in just the right place at the right time, which was awesome. On very rare occasions I plotted a successful intercept course (on foot or in a patrol vehicle) and wound up by design being in the right place at just the right time to catch a bad guy, which is practically an incomparable feeling.

On occasion some bad guys would try to row or even swim across the bay to avoid apprehension; most of them were caught. I had plenty of fugitives climb out windows and run out back doors while I was at the front door, sometimes while their accomplices stalled me.



I caught and apprehend hundreds of scofflaws and fugitives with warrants for their arrest, ranging from minor municipal offenses with measly $100 bail amounts to federal million-dollar or no-bail felony warrants. Some didn't know they were wanted persons. Most of them did. Some knew that when they got caught they were going back to prison for a very long time. Some of the people I took to jail did not get free again until they got out of prison years and years later. It always struck me with wonderment when that happened; that I was the one who ended their last moments of freedom.



I drove prisoners to other neighboring jurisdictions for extradition to their courts or jails, and sometimes picked up prisoners from other agencies or counties as needed. And I waited in more than few hospital rooms to take deserving patients straight to jail after the doctors finished with them.



I saw too many people get away with crimes that I knew they had committed but I just could not prove it. Actually, just about any and every crime imaginable; I knew people who got away with it. Yes, that includes rapes, robberies, and murders. But I did see karma occasionally finally catch up to a few folks, and sometimes spectacularly.

I've seen people fake seizures and heart attacks to avoid going to jail. Unfortunately it usually worked, although when we really wanted the arrestees to go to jail we'd follow the aid car to the hospital and re-arrest the fakers as soon as the doctors in the ER found nothing wrong with them.



I participated in plenty of searches for missing children, missing adults, missing senior citizens, missing spouses, missing livestock and missing pets. I searched buildings, houses, stores, schools, and vehicles of every kind and I found teen runaways, harbored fugitives, and all kinds of criminals trying to hide from me in back rooms, in closets, under cars, under mattresses, and sitting on toilets. Yes, plural hiding under mattresses and plural sitting on toilets. I searched thousands of pockets and wallets and purses and glove boxes for illegal items and weapons and I embarrassed plenty of people when I found interesting personal items. I also found hidden guns, drugs, paraphernalia and contraband, and freshly stolen merchandise concealed in all kinds of strange places. More than few times I found drugs stuffed into the back of my police car rear seat from prisoners. In attempts to dodge responsibility and culpability I heard a lot of people try to disown the jackets they wearing, the purses they were carrying, and even the pants they had on. For many years I felt like they were insulting my intelligence but after a while I began to enjoy the ridiculousness of the lame excuses. Of the thousands of people I asked for ID from, more than a few tried to explain to me that they had lost their wallets or left them at home. None of them thanked me or appreciated my magical skill when on occasion I managed to find their missing ID cards and wallets right there in their purses or pockets.



I learned people who act guilty usually are. The guys in the car in front of me who keep turning around to stare nervously at the police car behind them? The people who when asked their name mumble it real quietly hoping I won't notice or care? The ones who keep their full hands behind their backs or in their pockets and the ones who can't help but keep casting furtive looks at that one box or envelope or package or thing over there? Guilty. And the loud ones who yelled and complained and protested non-stop with squawking trash-talking threatening-with-lawyers and lawsuits with righteous offensive? Yep, absolutely very guilty. I saw more than a few idiots confess to crimes they didn't commit to take the heat off of boyfriends, girlfriends, and spouses - sometimes out of loyalty and sometimes out of fear and sometimes I have no idea why.



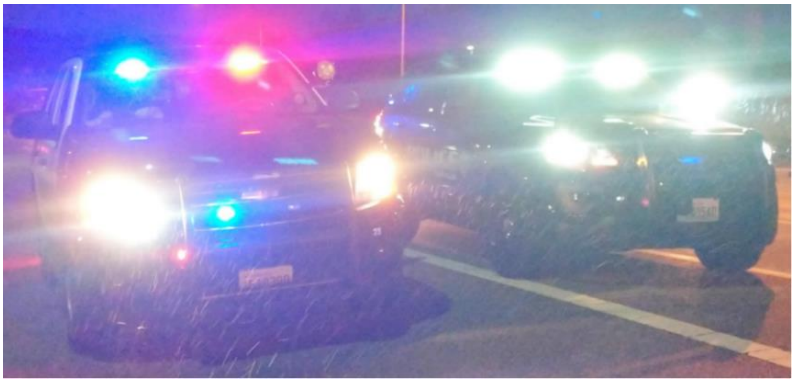
I found and recovered stolen property in a lot of different places and circumstances. Found keys and found home phones were fun to return; the panic button on the key fob would eventually connect to the car when close enough and the home phones would eventually be able to connect to 911 when close enough to their base set.



I investigated countless crime scenes of every kind in houses, apartments, parks, schools, stores, businesses, on highways, and in vehicles. I investigated random and targeted property crimes, hate crimes, organized crimes, mail thefts, identity theft, and major theft rings. I caught thieves stealing mail, stealing metal, stealing wood, and even stealing rocks.



I did more than few media interviews on camera and I had more than my fair share of pictures and articles on the front pages of the two local newspapers, but it was always for good things, thank you God. I received a few community awards, and participated in a few TV and radio public safety announcements. One radio commercial featuring my voice got airplay on several Seattle radio stations for a few months, and I heard from citizens that they had even heard it played on at least one radio station in Montana, of all places.



I wasn't a serious collector but when officers from other departments or countries wanted to trade shoulder patches I readily obliged.



I went to a lot of police trainings, courses, conferences, and classes and have a few dozen certificates in a box to prove it.



I've been called plenty of names, with all sorts of adjective and adverbs thrown in for color. I've had more than a few folks demand my badge number, just like on TV; I guess they didn't realize my last name, out of a department of just a dozen patrol officers, would be sufficient to ID me.





More than once I handcuffed three people together using two sets of handcuffs; the trick is to cross-cuff left wrist to left wrist and right wrist to right wrist, which would make any attempt at running away virtually impossible.



I participated in law enforcement charity events and fund raisers. I directed traffic for marathon runs, fun runs, festivals, and I coordinated bike rodeos for kids. I was in a few parades and was generally pretty well known in my community.



I saw all kinds of folks stranded, ditched, left behind and abandoned in all kinds of circumstances.

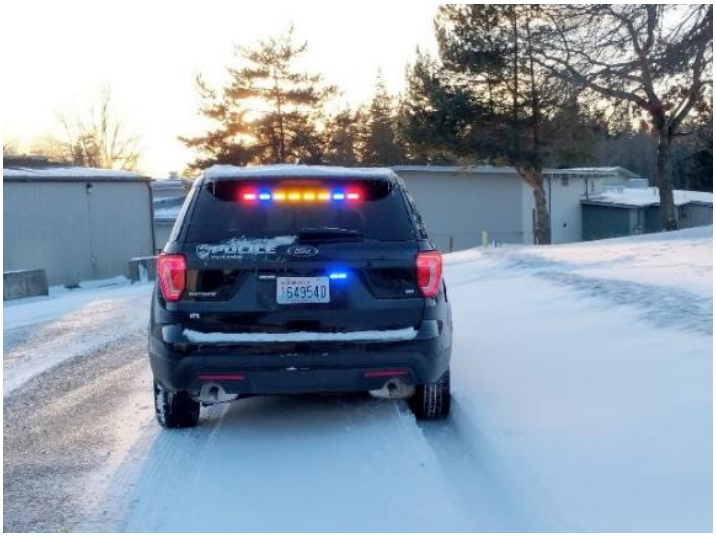
At big crime scenes I dodged news reporters and cameramen with satellite vans set up and I watched news camera helicopters hover noisily overhead. I wrote some press releases and got interviewed plenty of times when I was willing and allowed to. Usually without being misquoted. I also leaked information to trusted media sources on occasion when I felt it was necessary, which was fortunately rare.



I learned that suicide by gun is actually not really the most reliable method. Because I saw an alarmingly high number of attempts that resulted not in death; just significant permanent brain damage. If you want to do it right, here's a helpful pro tip: you gotta aim for the brain stem, always. Not the front of the brain, or the side; you have to take out the vital brain stem in the back.



I got called out to investigate more than a few suspicious bags, packs, and packages. Only one was an actual improvised explosive device. I investigated my share of death threats, bomb threats and arson scenes. I called bomb squads and explosives experts when needed. I was dispatched to go investigate countless complaints of smoke, noise, road hazards, suspicious people, unwanted people, and people freaking out. Sometimes they were gone, sometimes I found them. I participated in drug raids, I served search warrants and arrest warrants, and I searched for all kinds of evidence in cars, houses, buildings, fields, and garbage cans. I set up barricade crime scene tape and guarded scenes as a containment officer, sometimes to keep people out and sometimes to keep people in. I investigated illegal tree cutting, brush pickers, poachers, hunters, and off-roaders.



I responded to a lot of stolen cars that were actually just misplaced in large parking lots. Of course quite a few cars were actually stolen, some quite brazenly. I also found a few stolen cars; one still had the keys in the ignition and the engine was running.



At emergency scenes I shut down roads and intersections, cleared parking lots, and evacuated people from buildings. I spent many hours on stakeouts of all kinds and at armed standoffs involving barricaded gunmen and fugitive felons.



I had the amusement of dealing with a few folks who threatened to call the police to come deal with me: “Get off my porch officer, I’m calling the police!”



I dealt with a lot of veterans with PTSD. Fortunately most of them were well aware they had problems, and easy to work with.



I got loudly farted on once by an arrestee while I was behind him, bent down to check for any possible weapons hidden on his ankles. Yes, it was really quite rude. He thought it was hilarious. Me, not so much.



I responded to a few wrong way drivers who somehow got confused on the main highway about which side of the road to drive on. I saw a few folks drive off from gas stations with gas nozzles still stuck in their cars. And back in the days when people could pump gas without having to pay first, I had to deal with what we called gas drive-offs, which is what is was called when somebody pumped a tank full of gas and then drove away, forgetting to pay. The gas station owner would notice, get the license plate, and call us to find the person. Every once in a while it was an intentional theft, but usually the cause was just forgetfulness.



I arrested, mirandized, interviewed, and handcuffed hundreds and hundreds if not well over a thousand lawbreakers of every kind, size, shape and color. I'm not going to exaggerate and say "thousands" because I did some rough calculations and I'm comfortable, as a small town cop, to present a humble number. Some of those folks were very young, some were very old. A lot of them were dirty, smelly, and scabby. Some of them were bloody. Some just wanted a warm place to eat a hot free meal. Some of them were innocent. Most didn't want to be arrested, but a few actually did; to make a political statement or to make a stand.



Many of my in-custody prisoners were released on their own recognizance for later court appearances and many were released to parents, or spouses, or relatives at the police station. But I drove hundreds of them to the jail. Some cried the whole way there, some slept, some swore and ranted, some begged for alcohol, cigarettes or a second chance. Some of them talked non-stop and some were violent, requiring a little recalibration halfway there. Some were too drunk or too injured to be booked and they had to go the hospital instead. A lucky few prisoners got a special strip search by the jailers at my request. Very few stayed at the jail long enough for my personal satisfaction about any kind of proper justice and I wish I could say that it was just a cliché but I did see way too many criminals get released back into the public before I could even finish typing my police report.



Most of my clients were resigned and compliant with getting arrested but many of them needed to be chased down first. At the end of the chase some gave up from exhaustion, some were trapped, and a few wanted to turn and fight. I had to tackle and subdue all kinds of resistive lawbreakers, ranging from young scrawny kids to violently aggressive criminally combative literally insane lunatics. I tackled distraught spouses, fleeing thieves, and a few poor guys who literally did nothing wrong except turn and run from me for no real reason, which is a really good attention-getter in my line of work. For the record - and unlike some of my coworkers - none of my in-custody prisoners ever escaped from me once I got them restrained in handcuffs, or in the back of my police car. Not all of my customers were stereotypical looking obvious criminals; more than a few were “normal” nice looking old people, and some looked like everybody’s grandpa or grandma. You’d be surprised.



I interviewed prisoners at the jail and guarded injured ones in the hospital emergency room. I got injured myself here and there; shed a little of my own blood on occasion, usually from scraped or cut fingers and knuckles. Bruises were not uncommon but for me, nothing major. I tried hard to avoid getting other peoples’ blood on me but it did happen every now and then. On a few occasions at crazy crime scenes my brain would blow a fuse bank or two and get completely overloaded, usually when normal looking things were violently moved to other places in pieces; sometimes it was very confusing for a few moments. And a couple of times I even got actual tunnel vision when dealing with super intense situations.



I had to deal with my share of random folks who were completely incoherent, unreasonably aggressive, mostly unconscious, and all kinds of idiotic.

I scolded and admonished lots of misbehaving grown adults including many folks old enough to be my grandparents. I investigated a lot of hit and runs, some were quite unintentional, some were egregious and deliberate.



In the dog category I chased a lot of dogs, looked for lost dogs, found some, lured, enticed, and cornered some, and captured less. Some dogs were happy, some were the complete opposite of happy. I dealt with dying dogs, hot dogs in cars, and dog maulings. Some of the mauling victims were other dogs, some were people. I ran after police dogs tracking bad guys through the woods, across apartment complexes, and up and down streets and parking lots. Some of them we caught, some got away usually because they ran to a waiting car before we got on the scene.



I dealt with teen and adult pranksters of all kinds; some pranks were funny, most were not, some were successful and some went wrong. I obsessed over catching juvenile vandals who wreaked havoc with spray paint, stickers, marker pens, bb guns, sling shots, fire extinguishers, and paintballs. Some got caught, most didn't. I caught a few vandals but frustratingly was never at the right place and right time to catch the vast majority of them.



I did a lot of crowd control work; I directed traffic on highways and city streets and roadways at crime scenes, major accidents, and during power outages. I stopped, started, and rerouted drivers by hand signals in every weather state imaginable; pouring rain and in the dark or in the snow in multi-lane state highway intersections. I got used to vehicles of every size and shape going past me at high speeds mere feet away while I was directing traffic in the middle of busy intersections. While directing traffic I was usually able to quickly fill my quota of meeting unreasonably irate, obnoxious, confused, lost, and oblivious motorists.

I used pepper spray and taser applications to end some fights. I put laser dots on people's chests and convinced them to surrender. When the situation warranted it on occasion I drew my firearm to convince people at gunpoint that I was deadly serious about them not making any sudden movements and they'd best not resist arrest. Although I carried a collapsible baton for my entire career I never actually had to use it to clobber anybody; it was used mostly just to reach over and adjust the passenger side air vents of my patrol cars.



During my patrols I encountered wildlife occasionally, usually at night. Some critters were very much alive, some quite dead. The list includes foxes, raccoons, beavers, possums, deer, bear, bobcat, coyote, and river otters. I was dispatched to respond to scenes and situations that included sled dogs, farm hogs, bears, bees, bats, goats, horses, racoons, an emu, whales, and spiders. I once famously wrangled a wayward potbellied pig; the pictures and local TV news story went viral. I've had a few other pictures get very popular, like my police K9 partner posing at the chief's desk and computer, or pretending to drive a patrol car, and the famous one where he was wearing a specially tailored old chief's shirt (with tie!) and then there was the one with me and another officer posing with some monster giant glazed Viking Donuts from the local bakery.



I helped plenty of kids and teens and even adults and senior citizens with public scavenger hunts, and I posed for more than a few photos with tourists. I also obliged more than a few young aspiring teen film makers when they wanted to make a scene for their movie with a cop in it. And when I was in a good enough mood to relent and succumb to begging citizens, I'd let them pose for pictures in the back of my patrol car, or wearing handcuffs.



I was in several pursuits chasing motorcycles, but I never caught any of them.



When people locked their keys in their cars; I used a slim jim and got in. Probably well over a hundred. I always asked folks how many times they've locked their keys in their car. One guy admitted to me "five times now.."



I experienced my share of hoaxes, and criminal-initiated 911 dispatched diversions, and the rare decoy bait.



I've had clients yell at me "I know my rights!" and "I will sue you!" and "Am I being detained?" and I heard way too many people tell me "I didn't do it!" when I walked into a room. They thought they were being so funny. They weren't.



I responded to fuel spills, gas leaks, chemical spills, and storm damage of all kinds. I followed miles-long trails of oil and paint leaks on roadways; sometimes I found the offending vehicle, usually I didn't. I set up traffic cones and road flares in all kinds of weather conditions around all kinds of road hazards and traffic collisions. I learned very early on how to deploy burning road flares so they didn't drip fire onto my body. I picked up off of roadways and streets and parking lots all kinds of debris, wreckage, and spilled loads. I saw a lot of roads and streets flooded, some by broken water lines and some by too much rain, too much melted snow, or too-high tides. I saw some roads washed away and I saw flooding in houses, stores, yards, and parking lots, and I saw the occasional landslide.

I've had more than a few nice little old ladies come up to me and ask me if I needed help while I was parked on the side of a road, filling out paperwork or working on my computer. ("Young man? Are you okay?")



I found and recovered a lot of stolen cars and I saw a lot of cars crashed, burned, smeared, stripped, misplaced, abandoned, vandalized, and repossessed. I pushed dozens of stalled, broken down, crashed, blocking, and disabled vehicles off the road using my push bumper grill bars. A few I pushed by hand. I investigated hit and runs of all types and I investigated hundreds of motor vehicle collision scenes from minor fender benders in parking lots to fatality accidents on highways.



I dealt with people who wanted to try and file false and fraudulent police reports for a number of different bogus reasons. I met a lot of folks who had no hesitation in making false written statements, under penalty of perjury, even. Some of them later really regretted doing that.



I saw innocent people falsely accused, and sometimes even arrested. I've seen victims and witnesses pick out the wrong suspects from photo line ups. I've seen witnesses and victims describe scenes very, very different than what security cameras recorded.



I saw a few folks run away from the police into blackberry bushes; with predictable end results.



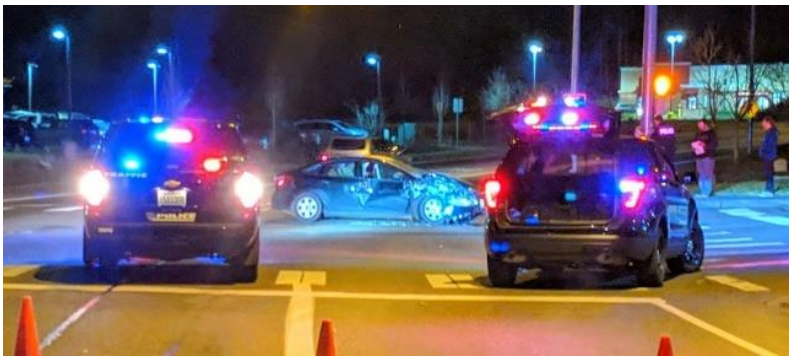
I impounded a lot of vehicles. The subsequent towing and storage fees for some were so high that the owners never bothered to pay that much to get their cars back.



I caught hundreds of people driving without valid driver's licenses, and hundreds more with no car insurance.



I saw parking violations of every kind and met too many dumb delivery drivers who felt stopping right in the roadway to unload some pallets would be okay.



I've met a few folks running around lost in public in varying stages of undress and nudity.



I tested hundreds of inebriated people of all ages for alcohol usage using large in-station breathalyzer machines, portable alcohol testers, and field sobriety tests, at drinking parties, school dances, alongside busy roads, and in school principal's offices. I saw a few impaired drivers escape justice when paramedics and even doctors with search warrants were not able to get any blood samples, due to collapsed blood veins.



I had to deal with hysterical people who insisted they were victims of a hate crime. Because they hated the crime that happened to them.



I caught a lot of drunk and impaired drivers; some of them were spectacularly wasted with extremely high levels of alcohol in their bloodstream, and some of them were still functioning at very high levels of capability somehow. The very first drunk driver I ever caught actually had his lawyer already with him in the car. They both thought it would be a good idea to try to argue with me. They were both wrong about that. I caught a lot of drivers who had never been pulled over before; ranging from new teen drivers with a license less than a week old to senior citizens who got their first license 50 years before I had been born.



I sent a lot of old people with deteriorating driving skills back to DOL to get their license re-examined or revoked. I stopped a few drivers from foreign countries, and I caught a few grown adults who had never bothered to ever even get a driver's license. I caught lots of drivers with suspended and revoked licenses; their cars got towed away. I've had upset drivers go from name dropping to name calling; both tactics were equally ineffective with me. I saw hundreds of deployed airbags and I saw a lot of dumb people who learned the hard way that seatbelts can save wear and tear on occupants in car crashes.



I saw some car vs. motorcycle accidents. And cars vs. bicyclists and cars vs. skateboarders. And cars vs. deer, and one motorcycle vs. a bear. The cars always won. I saw a lot of different body parts broken by cars and I saw I lot of vehicle parts broken by people's bodies: windows smashed by heads, steering wheels bent in like tacos by hands and arms, gas pedals twisted by feet, and cringe-inducing major dents on the outsides of cars from people's elbows and hips.



I pulled over thousands and thousands of motorists for every traffic offense you can imagine. I heard a lot of different excuses but I can't say I heard every excuse in the book because there were always new and original ones. The best creative ones were usually rewarded with no tickets because I enjoyed them so much, although I never told people that. Some drivers got very big breaks from me while other more very deserving motorists got every offense I could find as a charge, sometimes totaling well over two thousand dollars. I wrote thousands of traffic and parking tickets to deserving motorists. The vast majority of caught drivers were given breaks, though.



I saw countless drivers suddenly reach for their seatbelts or drop their cell phones or stomp on their brakes when they saw me watching them. Sometimes it was pretty funny. I also met a few people in car accidents who had been wearing their seatbelts because I had stopped them previously and warned them either verbally or with a ticket.

I have dealt with more than few folks who crashed their cars – usually drunk, of course - fled the scene, and then called 911 the next morning to report their car must have been stolen by somebody else the night before and they had no idea what happened!



I had to deal with a lot of nosy busybodies who wanted Police! Action! for really, really lame and minor offenses.



I saw car doors ripped and peeled off, car windows blown out and blown in, power poles sheared in half, trees plowed over, and cars consumed by fire either in part or in whole sometimes with the people still in them. I saw cars upside down and on their sides in all kinds of interesting places and circumstances.



I saw some cars driven out of control far off the roadway deep into woods, usually with disastrous results. I saw cars and trucks and motorcycles of every size shape color make and model smashed crashed rolled wrapped exploded burned and flipped every way imaginable into other motor vehicles, semi-trucks, fire hydrants, trees, poles, mailboxes, signs, embankments, curbs, creeks, wet cement, ditches, beaches, sidewalks, lawns and fields, storefront windows, buildings, guardrails, bicyclists, skateboarders, pedestrians animals and fences, including one particularly popular wooden fence near the high school that got run into more than a dozen times by teen drivers over the years, usually when the road was wet. I saw cars balanced precariously on retaining walls and embankments and I saw more than a few driven quite dramatically into storefronts and buildings.



I saw crashed cars with missing wheels, drivetrains torn off, oil pans blown off, windshields shattered from airbags or occupants' faces, and mangled fronts ends that smashed the horns into the on position. I saw seatbelts stressed so fast and hard in crashes that the webbing literally melted a little from the instant sudden forced friction. After a while I got used to seeing crazy crashes in broad daylight on dry pavement when driving conditions seemed perfectly safe. I also saw things stuck under cars, like garbage cans, animals, and people. I dragged road kill off roads and I made road kill and I saw some road kill that was quite spectacularly gross and unpleasant. I also saw more than few fried squirrels that fell from power lines or transformers.



I saw more than a few crashed cars with drugs and alcohol in them. I saw vehicles lose loads, lose brakes, and lose major components like bumpers, wheels, and transmissions. I saw the results of vehicle tires that have come off while in motion and went rolling and bouncing and violently flying into ditches and into cars. I saw smoking tires, tires on fire, bald tires, brakes on fire, blown tires, and shredded tires on rims. I saw some tow-truck mishaps, too, which was always extra fun.



I saw accident victims in shock from medical or psychological trauma. I saw people hit by cars who were knocked out of their shoes. I saw people who had been ejected out of crashed cars. Some actually were thrown "clear"; others, not so much. I never saw a seat belted occupant ejected. I saw some people survive an initial accident but die later from injuries sustained; some lasted days and some only minutes.



More than once I recovered license plates left behind at crash scenes (I LOVED that!!) by fleeing hit and run drivers. I also saw lots of switched license plates, altered plates, and counterfeit plates. I carried a screwdriver around for many years and took a lot of bogus license plates away from people, sometime with legal authority and sometimes maybe without. I pulled over multiple cars at once (my all-time record was lining up nine at once one right after another) and I did catch some repeat offenders multiple times. A met a lot of drivers and passengers who wanted to try the old switcheroo, some were successful and some weren't when helpful witnesses were present. I got dispatched to intercept and stop road raging motorists; some I missed and some I caught. Some of them were actually pretty worked up and just stupid violent.



I caught people littering; smoldering cigarette butts flicked out of cars, bags of garbage thrown out, piss bottles tossed out, and other folks who filled garbage dumpsters that did belong to them, which is called a theft of services.



I got dispatched to a million reckless drivers; most were just idiots but a few were dangerously sleepy and more than a few were drunk. I also got dispatched to about a hundred calls of drivers "slumped over steering wheels" – the vast majority of them were just sleeping or texting and not close to dead, although occasionally there would be one having a diabetic issue or something.



I learned early on to expect at least one frustratingly oblivious driver for about every half mile of roadway when I was driving fast with lights and sirens in order to get somewhere in an emergency hurry.



I also had to deal with - virtually every day - too-polite drivers who felt like abdicating their legal turn at intersections to let the police car go through first, even when I was in no rush at all and they got there first. My response was to stay put and insist they follow the rules of the road and continue the legal rotation protocol; thank you but no need to confuse things just because a police car rolls up to a stop sign.



I hosted a lot of civilian ride alongs in my patrol cars and I trained a lot of reserve officers, citizen volunteers, new officers, and new police dispatchers. My favorite ride along partners were cops from other states or other countries. A lot (probably most) of my civilian riders found the experience much more boring than they had anticipated, even though I warned them it would not be like a TV show. Of the dozens of riders I hosted, only 2 got the lucky chance to be with me when I took a bad guy to the jail.



I gave a lot of tours of the police station to youth groups of every kind and age range, and did a lot of presentations to community groups. I gave a lot of rides to stranded people, refueled some empty gas tanks and changed a lot of flat tires. I unlocked literally hundreds of cars when people locked their keys inside; it was much easier in the old days before cars had electric locks and instead there were mechanical linkages inside the doors that I could snag with a slim jim tool. And I helped more than a few folks get back into locked their locked houses.

I worked a lot of shifts with weird hours; like starting a day at 3 am, or finishing at 4 am. My normal work days were 8 or 10 hours long, but sometimes I had to work a shift that turned out to be 12, 14, 16, or 18 hours. Sometimes I knew in advance they would be long shifts, many times it was a surprise. Mandatory overtime was required on and off for most of my career. The older I got, the less I liked it. Toward the end, I hated it.



I gave directions to a lot of lost people. Some were from foreign countries. My favorites were the couple from France quite confuzzled with the worst, smallest, least-detailed map of Washington state possible, and then there was the merchant marine who had a destination in Florida but was actually heading north toward Canada.



I dealt with homeless transients living in encampments in the woods; some camps were temporary and some were permanent. I encountered vagrants passing through town, and there was a rotating cast of permanent and temporary resident local village idiots - some charming and harmless, and some quite obnoxious. I renamed most of them with monikers to match their personalities and characteristics. Sometimes I drove cooperative vagabonds and hobos out of town to get rid of them. Sometimes officers from the neighboring police agencies would drive them back later to repay the favor.



I met several different homeless cat ladies who carried around cats in small cages. I always felt bad for the cats.

I got in the habit of looking down certain side streets and certain driveways so much that I did automatically, even off duty.



I dealt with dead, dying, and senile people in nursing homes and assisted care facilities. I saw sick, dying, and dead people with unbelievably large collections of medications. Every time I went in a nursing home I felt a strong urge to go home and eat some vegetables and be healthy and not ever wind up in a nursing home as a resident or patient.



I confronted solicitors of all kinds: door to door salesmen, (some legitimate and some not) con artists, proselytizers, prostitutes looking for clients, and just plain beggars - some truly destitute and some not so much.



I responded to a lot of cases where things had been completely blown out of proportion, over hyped, or misinterpreted badly, sometimes by the witnesses, and more disheartening, sometimes by the 911 dispatchers themselves.



Over the years I saw friends and acquaintances move up in the world in their respective fields; lawyers became judges, firemen became fire chiefs, patrol officers become police chiefs, teachers became principals, business owners became community leaders, and community leaders became politicians.



I also saw a lot of seemingly normal folks fall from grace and lose everything. I handcuffed a few people who officially lost their careers the moment I cuffed them; especially naval officers. The navy never even waited to see if the police arrests would result in a criminal prosecution; just getting arrested was enough cause to yank security clearances and kill promotion chances for even - and especially - high ranking officers like submarine commanders. Unfortunately, I also saw an alarmingly high number of fellow police officers self-destruct in a variety of ways and means.



Some of the worst officers got arrested. Some went to jail. The really bad ones went to prison. Painful to see, but culling the herd is necessary sometimes. I also knew many cops who had accidentally fired off rounds from their guns. They shot locker room floors, parking lots, and countertops when there was no bad anywhere near them. It is commonly suspected that for every known accidental discharge there are doubtless many more in private that go unwitnessed and unreported. For the record, I never shot a bullet that I didn't mean to, and every single one was at the firing range. Or to send an injured animal to the rainbow bridge more expeditiously.



I found myself in some really awkward situations; having to interview, accuse, and arrest occasional former classmates, school teachers, community leaders, and business owners. More than once I arrested a former police officer and more than a few times I busted kids whose parents were police officers.



I had to deal with a few (too many, actually) police officers misbehaving badly; sometimes with the public, and sometimes with each other. I saw a variety of different kinds of police misconduct; some were ethical or moral failings, some were criminal in nature. And I had probably more than my fair share of insufferable incompetent police supervisors.



I ran across a few bad guys so often in my career that I wound up memorizing their full names and birthdates so I could check them for warrants every time I saw them loose out in public again. I was not happy that their personal information was taking up memory space in my brain. Fortunately, 99 percent of the all the bad guys I met I was able to easily dump their names from my mental database eventually. I met a lot of citizens who were certain that I still remembered their past criminal history from 10, 15, or 20 years prior; most were disappointed that I had forgotten them but a few were elated when I explained to them that whatever they did that I had arrested them for years ago, it hadn't been vivid or unique enough for me to still remember them.



I did see some people reform themselves and turn their lives completely around but I saw many more just never get it and throw their lives away for a number of reasons and causes. I met a lot of repeat offenders, chronic repeat offenders, and slow learners. I crossed paths with a few special career criminals repeatedly over my entire career and I arrested multiple generations from the same families and for a couple of families virtually every single one of them over time. I saw way too many doomed kids grow up to become losers and fulfill their expected destinies of having more jail booking photos than birthday cakes. I caught a few bad guys who were later deported back to their home countries, and I caught a lot of bad guys who went to straight to prison after the jail; their last free moments in society were ended when I handcuffed them.



I put out a few fires – literally - and I saw a lot of fires consume property. I saw houses on fire, buildings on fire, cars on fire, barns and fields on fire, restaurants, businesses, portable toilets, trees, bark, brush, decks, porches, power lines and transformers on fire. I saw a lot of trees go down into power lines and trees crashed onto roads, and cars, and houses. I saw houses that should have been on fire but weren't. I saw houses where people never took the garbage out or cleaned the cat litter boxes. I saw heart wrenchingly cute little kids living in neglect, squalor and garbage. I saw "normal" people living in garbage and clutter filled houses. I saw people who died in squalor and filth and poverty, with bank saving account balances in the six digits. I saw the inside of crazy cat lady houses, I saw houses where hoarders lived, houses saturated with mold, rotten houses with holes clear through the roofs and ceilings and walls, houses with no running water, and one unforgettable dead rat man's house. I had to visit hundreds and hundreds of different houses and apartments on 911 calls of every kind. Some were repeat visits to the same places over the years but with different occupants, which was always a little weird in a familiar sort of way for some reason. I saw a few evictions. I saw houses with interior decorating frozen in time from decades past. I saw immaculately clean houses and unbelievably filthy houses. Interestingly enough both kinds always inspired me to go home and clean mine.





I saw pedestrians who had been hit by cars, bicyclists hit by cars, and motorcyclists hit by cars. One motorcyclist had slid unscathed under a semi-truck between the wheels. I accompanied some patients to the hospital emergency room. I saw the occasional freak accident, some without but most with accompanying violent bloody trauma. I met quite a few pedestrians and passengers and drivers who had narrowly escaped death in car crashes.



I had access to privileged confidential information and I was exposed to sensitive matters and embarrassing salacious secrets involving a lot of people I knew, including high ranking public and private community leaders and well known and well respected citizens. Sometimes it was their sons, daughters, or spouses who got arrested for drunk driving, shoplifting, domestic violence, or child molesting and sometimes it was the “important and respectable” people themselves. I learned more than a few private and embarrassing family secrets for mayors, judges, council members, and business leaders. Conversely, I also suspect that some -or probably a lot of- citizens figured that I knew a lot more about them and their secrets than I actually did.



I witnessed a lot of medical emergencies like diabetic episodes, CPR in progress, amputations, head trauma victims, car crash victims, poisonings, drug overdoses, alcohol overdoses and garage and industrial accidents. I saw people comatose, unconscious, in shock, and scared speechless.

I saw my share of disgusting and horrifying things. I met a lot of really smelly people. The worst ones were pretty dead and exuding horrific odors of putrefaction and decomposition.



I had to work on a lot of holidays like the 4th of July, Thanksgiving, and Christmas and I missed some birthday parties and family events. I had to interrupt a lot of meals to respond to emergency calls. If a meal on duty was at a sit down restaurant I always paid first so I could run out the door if I had to. And sometimes I had to. I ate a lot of meals in my patrol car, learning the hard way that tacos are not doable. And powdered donuts while in uniform are almost impossible to get away with.



On many different occasions I had drunks, criminals, and very upset people curse at me, spit at me, call me racist, challenge me and threaten me with physical harm or lawsuits. I had a few customers complain about me to my sergeants, and/or the chief, and/or the mayor, and/or the newspapers. I saw my name spray painted as graffiti out in public and my name actually appeared more than once carved onto jail cell doors or walls, including one as a perplexing short love letter. I had to duck out of a few stores, restaurants, and other public places after spotting former clients of mine who had just been released from jail or prison, because I never wanted to encounter them with my family accompanying me.

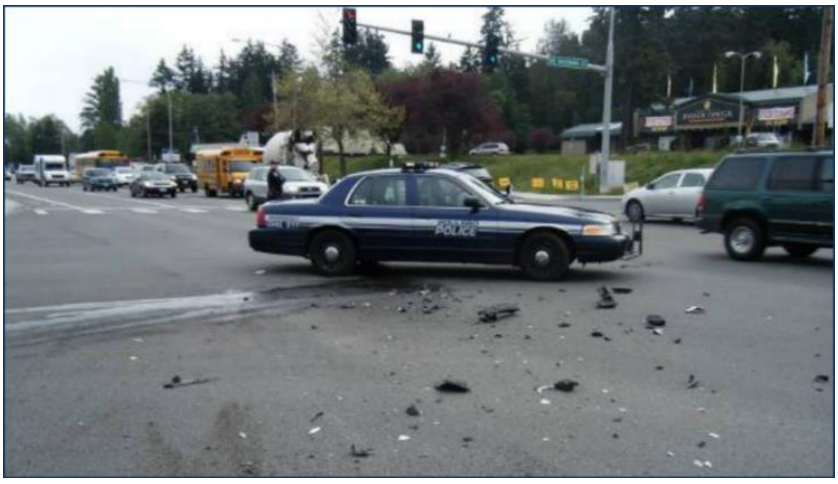




Did I see people naked? Sigh…yes I did. Streakers, flashers, and sunbathers. Naked people intentionally exposing themselves. Naked people unintentionally exposing themselves. Skinny scrawny naked people, extremely overweight naked people. Naked old people. Naked people who were crazy. Naked people drunk. Naked people on drugs, naked people having sex. Naked people who were dead. Most of the naked people I saw really should have kept their clothes on.



I mediated every kind of dispute imaginable. Child custody disputes, property disputes, landlord/tenant disputes, neighbor noise disputes, customer disputes, epic neighbor property line and fence disputes, smarmy car salesmen instigated car buying disputes, and every kind of family argument imaginable and possible.



At various times I described my job as being a marriage counselor, a public driving instructor, and a garbageman.

At some point in my career I developed and retained a pretty strong level of confidence and fearlessness for approaching potentially dangerous situations. Which is not to say that I never got scared because that did happen; it's just that my courage always overpowered my fears. I jumped into a few fights too eagerly and eventually learned that discretion and patience is the better part of valor when dealing with violent people. I encountered a lot of hostile people with weapons. And there was the surprisingly strong old man with the cane, the agitated homeless man with the baseball bat, the little kid with the stick, and the unforgettable shaking young schizophrenic woman who greeted me at her door with wild eyes, brandishing a very large butcher knife.



I have patiently talked people out of their cars and resorted to extracting them forcefully when needed. I crashed and ended teen drinking parties and teen fight clubs. I broke up adults fighting and having altercations and confrontations, in bars, schools, woods, homes, fields, stores, and parking lots. Some were mutual combat fights but most were actual unwanted assaults. I calmed down or subdued a lot of out of control and enraged people. I met more than a few folks unconscious in public restrooms and passed out in cars; all drug addicts, of course.



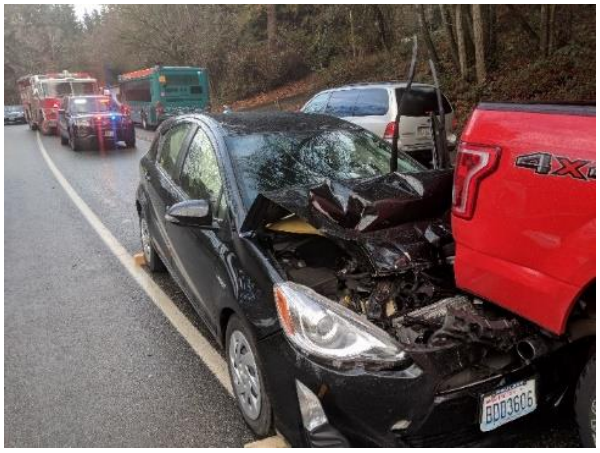
I watched surveillance recordings from schools, stores, and police cameras. I set up surveillance cameras in the woods and recorded suspect confessions in police interview rooms. I interviewed hundreds of people for all kinds of police investigations. A few were brutally honest with their confessions but most were liars in part or in whole for every reason imaginable. Some of the more memorable liars included a nice old grandmother, a beloved but secretly pedophile school teacher, a well-respected community newspaper editor, and a popular Catholic priest. I elicited confessions of every kind imaginable (sometimes by using ruses and bluffs) and had a lot of people tell me very personal things I didn't even ask about and didn't want to know about. I also had a lot of interrogations fail in whole or in part and I was not able to elicit the confessions I wanted. For some crime victims I made photo montage line ups to catch the bad guy; sometimes the victims would pick out the correct suspect, sometimes not. Although I was always tempted I never once tried to influence the victims to choose the correct perp. I participated in set-ups and stings but never any illegal entrapments, despite what a lot of caught people thought. Speaking of ruses and bluffs, on more than one occasion I successfully lured wanted persons out into the open by making a big show of leaving the scene with lights and sirens, like I was going somewhere else important. Only to sneak back quietly a minute later when they thought the coast was clear to flee.



I had to deal with a lot of parents who were in denial about their messed up kids, or they were indifferent. Even worse were the ones who lied about, made excuses for, or actually encouraged their delinquent juveniles. I had to deal with horrible parents who covered for and protected their kids, let their kids wreak havoc and then some of them even blamed ME for their kids' police records and subsequent life of crime. I wish I were joking but I am not. I saw a lot of kids cause a lot of heartache for their parents – parents from every socio-economic status and demographic including those who were politicians, judges, and police officers.



I solved a lot of crimes but plenty more were unsolved because the suspects were unidentified or I couldn't get quite enough proof on the culprits I suspected.



I investigated suspiciously open doors at houses, businesses, and vehicles. I crawled in through a few windows. I checked houses, apartments, sheds, business, parking lots, and parks for suicidal people. Sometimes I found them.



I responded to many bank robberies, violations of no-contact orders, and I dealt with abused and neglected and runaway children who didn't want to go home after school. Back when we had a secure locked-down facility to take runaway kids to, I drove a lot of them there where they would receive needed counseling and resources.



I listened in on recorded phone conversations from the jail; it always amused how inmates forgot they were being recorded and incriminated themselves talking to accomplices about the crimes they had committed.



I fingerprinted plenty of criminals and I took a lot of booking photos. I dug through garbage for evidence and searched houses, fields, and roads for evidence.



I dealt with a lot of drivers who left gas stations without paying, sometimes intentionally, sometimes not.



I saw parked cars roll away and cause problems. The scariest ever was when one time it was almost my own patrol car.



I recovered lost and found property like mail, bicycles, and lots of purses and wallets. The most memorable one was the wallet left behind at a gas station; to find the owner I had to go through everything in it and I discovered not only crazy amounts of middle eastern currency from several different countries but also jet pilot ID cards for the exclusive private jet company he worked for flying sheiks and other filthy stinking rich VIPS around in the middle east. It was a fascinating private glimpse into somebody else's exciting life.



I had a mental list of local motel rooms to never check into, having seen some special kinds of depravity in some of them including general felony crimes against the carpets and furniture. Not people crimes, I'm talking about crimes against the carpet: food spills, bodily fluid messes, vomit, beer, mud, etc..



Because our bay in Poulsbo had three marinas I saw a number of sunken boats, sinking boats, stolen boats, derelict and abandoned boats, found boats, lost boats, crashed boats, capsized boats, abandoned boats, boats used to smuggle drugs, boats adrift and boats beached, and boats with dead bodies floating next to them. I also saw more than a few cars crashed on a beach; some were above the high tide line, some were in the water, and some underwater.



I had to deal with a lot of people who didn't speak English very well, or at all, including an alarmingly high number of drivers who were able to produce for me current and valid driver's licenses. I still don't understand how or why that is even possible.



I served a lot of court orders; anti-harassment order, protection orders, restraining orders, and subpoenas. I saw a lot of smart people make really poor decisions, a few times right in front of me.



I stood by and kept the peace while people moved out of their houses or came back to retrieve personal belongings with angry spouses yelling at them. I saw a few folks dump their lover's or roommate's possessions out into the front yard, or off an apartment balcony.



At crime scenes I photographed, diagramed, tested, collected, bagged and sealed latent fingerprints and other evidence that put people in jail. My favorites were the perfect muddy shoeprint a rooftop burglar left on a full sheet of blank paper on top of a file cabinet that he stepped on as he came down through the ceiling panels, and the numerous times burglars dropped or left behind their own ID cards, drivers licenses, or credit cards. Yes, that really happens. Usually our crime scene evidence that needed professional processing and testing went to the state crime lab via mail but a few of the more serious cases required my personal delivery there.



I investigated crime scenes in houses, in churches, in stores and businesses, in schools, on highways, in parks, and in vehicles. I disappointed many crime victims by not being able to do the high-tech forensic evidence testing like they show on TV. Citizens asked me to fingerprint steering wheels, analyze paint chips, and take DNA off of car airbags. They hopefully expected me to use, I don't know, my police-issued special infrared ultraviolet spectroscopic high speed genetic encoding laser analyzer scanner machine to ID the suspect. Again, my career was not like what you see on cop shows on TV.



I got yelled at a lot by a lot of people for a variety of reasons. Usually undeservedly. To make things fair and balanced, I yelled at a lot of people. Yes, perhaps sometimes undeservedly. But usually not. Which was an interesting aspect of my job; being able to reproach and reprimand and yell at grown adults in an effort to get them conform with society.



I investigated cases of counterfeit money being passed along as real. I saw a lot of fake ID's, forged documents, bogus checks, and perjurious statements.



I confiscated illegal fireworks and illegal weapons and illegal drugs of all kinds, and accepted ammunition collections from people cleaning out their basements and garages.



I counseled, advised, lectured, and admonished kids and adults of all ages in all kinds of situations imaginable. At parent's requests I scared straight a lot of youths, using a variety of means and tactics. I also managed to scare straight quite a few adults and I made a lot of people cry, not always unintentionally. Including many grown men.



I gave a lot of people a lot of breaks when I felt they did not probably deserve full punishment as allowed or required by law. The breaks ranged from not giving them traffic tickets to not taking them to jail and on very rare occasions when it was warranted and just, I sometimes didn't even write a police report for a felony they committed; knowing it would show up in future background checks and cause serious complications for future job prospects. I talked a few folks out of committing serious crimes either before or during, and conversely, when warranted, I let more than a few folks start committing a crime so I could catch them in the act.



I counseled scam, fraud, and identity theft victims. When the scams were unbelievably blatant (and virtually all of them were) and the victims unbelievably stupid then there was usually not much sympathy from me. I just can't reward stupidity with sympathy.

I fingerprinted and took booking photos of a lot of criminals. I checked up on registered sex offenders and parolees wearing ankle bracelets.



I found bones and I received bones other people had found. Most were animal; some were human.



I delivered bad news to people and I worked with police chaplains and deputy coroners dealing with emotionally distressed and grieving survivors. I dealt with a lot of domestic violence assault victims. Because we had a mandatory arrest law for domestic violence perpetrators I made a lot of family arrests. Most were easy to make, but some were extremely difficult when the victims turned out to be the ones who had to get arrested. In those cases, the prosecutor would accept our input and quickly decide to dismiss the case with no charges, when none were actually warranted.



I consoled victims of rape, robbery, burglary, assault, theft, threats, mistaken identity, and random senseless violence.



I stopped a lot of suspicious people on the streets for field interviews. Sometimes they'd get to move along, sometimes they'd get arrested. I frisk searched and patted down countless suspects, arrestees and prisoners prior to handcuffing.



I met my share of stolen guns, found guns, and guns used in homicides and suicides. I dealt with a number of folks wearing handguns or sporting rifles out in public; either for self protection, or they were making a statement, or they were baiting the police to see if their rights were going to be violated.



I worked off duty uniformed security jobs of all kinds at community events, high school dances, football games, and graduations. I worked at banks during holiday/bank robbery seasons, and once I escorted truckload of full bank safe deposit boxes to a new bank building. I once worked at a public theatre for a Trump v. Clinton live-streamed presidential debate, and I escorted funeral processions, and also once worked once in plainclothes at a wedding to watch for a jealous ex-husband. Who didn't show up.



I responded to public disturbances, petty parking complaints and noise complaints of every kind; from random gunfire coming from somewhere over there to ominous scary sounding noises of things bumping in the night outside, under, or in houses, and there were of course many barking dogs and too-early in the morning construction noises, lawnmowers, dirt bikes, drinking parties, live amplified garage bands, and one unforgettable hilariously obnoxious late night Vietnamese yowling karaoke party.



I read a lot of victim, witness, and suspect statements, handwritten with stunning and frankly highly amusing levels of illiteracy. I also read quite a few statements that were complete fabrications of lies, with no regard to the perjury warning printed at the bottom of every form.



I banished and excluded and officially criminally trespassed a lot of criminally guilty people from stores, schools, businesses, parks, neighborhoods and sometimes their own houses. Sometimes I encouraged or demanded that certain deserving people leave the premises, the city, or even the state – those orders were of course way beyond my authority - but sometimes it actually worked, to the great amusement of myself and my fellow officers.

I got served with too many subpoenas for lawyer interviews, investigative depositions, hearings, and criminal court cases. I testified in municipal court, juvenile court, and superior court, sometimes for bench trials and sometimes with juries present. I usually did not really enjoy being examined or cross examined by criminal defense attorneys in court. The younger and less-experienced public defenders were generally less inclined to grill me on the stand, as opposed to the older, more experienced and more expensive private attorneys.



Over the course of my long police career I worked with K9 handlers, police drug dogs, police tracking dogs and police bomb dogs. I worked with animal control officers, public works crews, police dispatchers, vice units, postal inspectors, fire marshals, school security staff, bailiffs, parole officers, probation officers, chaplains, EMT's and paramedics, traffic flaggers, department of licensing agents, tow truck drivers, state, county, city, and private company road and traffic crews, traffic flaggers, evidence technicians, retail loss prevention associates and asset protection officers, search and rescue teams, customs officers, uniformed and plainclothes security guards, undercover narcotics officers and detectives, child protective services, adult protective services, public defenders, private defense attorneys, prosecutors, coroners, deputy coroners, explosive ordinance experts, nursing home administrators, CPS caseworkers, APS caseworkers, DOL employees, doctors, nurses, medical examiners, funeral home staff, corrections officers, armored car guards, airlift flight nurses and pilots, apartment managers, interpreters, school administrators, military police, customs and immigration agents, liquor control board agents, state troopers, border patrol agents, social workers, NCIS agents, polygraphers, newspaper reporters and editors, police instructors, crime lab techs, victim advocates, photographers and video camera crews, utility linemen, school administrators, process servers, juvenile detention staff, detox intake staff, emergency room staff, psychiatrists, psychologists, SWAT TEAMS, community service workers, school bus drivers, public mental health professionals, repo men, private investigators, pawn store owners, and bounty hunters.





I saw the results of pranksters causing mischief at night, like egging cars or houses (not cool) or changing the letters around on store or school reader boards (some pretty funny) or the classic dumping of soap detergent into public fountains - a successful application would create a mountain of foam and bubbles big enough to cover an entire roadway several feet thick. The fountain owners were never amused though.



I participated in multi-agency task forces and sting ops to catch people selling alcohol or cigarettes to minors, or to catch people selling themselves to other people. In other special multi-agency traffic enforcement emphasis patrol task forces we'd focus on catching drivers using their cell phones, or not wearing their seat belts, or speeding. And I participated in quite a few DUI task force patrol events. Some of the speed task force patrols involved working with state patrol pilots and spotters in their small observation aircraft.





I've surprised a few naked folks in bed, and more than a few in cars late at night.



I saw scary restaurant kitchens after hours; the kind of scary that made me vow to never eat there again.



On many occasions I was the only patrol officer on duty in the entire city, sometimes for more than a few hours. Usually I was able to handle whatever came my way, by myself.



I saw a lot of new laws come and I saw a lot old laws go away and a lot of state and federal case laws change how we had to do things. Most of the new laws made our policing jobs more difficult, not easier.



I dealt with a lot of witnesses and victims who somehow managed to misinterpret reality and give me completely wrong descriptions of suspects and suspect vehicles.



I arrested countless shoplifters of all ages, ranging from dumb teenagers to surprisingly well-respected citizens. Most actually had enough money in their pockets to pay for the stupid things they stole.

I saw people commit crimes in every way imaginable: Malicious, inattentive, negligent, reckless, flagrant, ignorant, and unknowingly.



When required I used my car's public address system speaker to make announcements from my grill speaker, usually to holler at folks to move their cars or yell at people to not run away. More than once I accidentally broadcast personal conversations over the police radio channel when my portable radio transmit button got quietly wedged open against something.



I also heard unauthorized people hijack our police radio channels on occasions, once was a taunting bad guy and once was a little kid who got a hold of his father's radio and started blabbering into excitedly it after hearing a patrol unit being dispatched to an address on a (seriously) "Sesame Street."



I accessed and used local, regional, state, and federal databases. I worked with law enforcement officers and deputies from dozens of different state, city, county, and tribal agencies in this state and many others states. And I had professional working relationships with detectives, investigators, and federal agents from the FBI, DEA, DNR, ICE, DOC, DOL, and NIS.



Okay that's enough of all of that. That's my description of what I did for a living as a patrol officer, and I think I did a good job of showing how my career as a public servant in law enforcement included the range of emotions and experiences that go from "fun" and "exciting" to "rewarding" and "challenging" to "frustrating" and "sickening" and "soul-sucking."



Now I have to add though that I certainly can't claim that I saw it all, because thank God I didn't. There were plenty of things I missed out on, for better or worse. For example, to answer a common question, no, I never shot anybody. And I never got shot at. That I know of, anyway. But I knew plenty of police officers who had found themselves in sudden lethal-force firefight situations; some were shot at from a distance, some were shot at up close. Some were saved from injury by their vest; some were injured seriously. In most of those cases the bad guy had fire returned; some of them were wounded, some were killed, and some killed themselves after being wounded.





To further illustrate how I wish to present the fact that I was not mister impressive superman supercop, there were a LOT of police experiences that I did not experience. Here are a few examples:



I never saw people trapped in a crashed car that was on fire. That burned them to death. Sometimes they were already dead, or unconscious. Sometimes they were very much alive until the fire got them. But I didn't have to see any of those events in progress. Some I saw afterward, but I was spared hearing and seeing the victims beg and scream and plead as they died. But I knew officers who did have to helplessly witness things like that.



I wasn't the first officer to check on a nearby state trooper who wasn't answering his radio at the scene of a traffic stop one night. Because the driver had decided to fatally shoot the trooper in the face and kill him immediately and then speed off.

I never had the experience of being in a sudden shootout in a Walmart parking lot that ended with a wounded bleeding police officer partner and a gunman who chose to then murder his girlfriend as she rushed up to him before turning the gun on himself.



I never had a crazy upset man looking at my gun begging or demanding to be shot, nor did I find myself in a pistol to pistol direct standoff with a gunman mere feet away and I never stopped a driver who lunged for his gun to try and kill me, resulting in a close quarter fist fight in the car, and ending with a police shooting and a one dead bad guy. But I knew officers who did have those experiences. Some of them needed a lot of counseling after those things happened to them. Some of them got it, some didn't.



I never tasered a drunk combative criminal defense attorney who had a license plate on his car that read "LAWSUIT."



I never got accused of raping a female prisoner while driving her to the jail.

I never suited up in riot gear and faced off with rioters or looters or protestors.



I never got offered a bribe of any kind.



I never had the experience of calling a suspect in for questioning and when he didn't show up it was because he had decided to just kill himself instead.



I never encountered a car crash scene with multiple dead teenagers ejected from the wreckage.



I never arrested a local politician or a fellow officer or a police supervisor from another police agency for driving drunk.



I never found a large hidden compartment in a car where a massively impressive quantity of drugs were being smuggled.



I never kicked in a police chief's front door to search his house and arrest his teenage son for being a drug dealer.

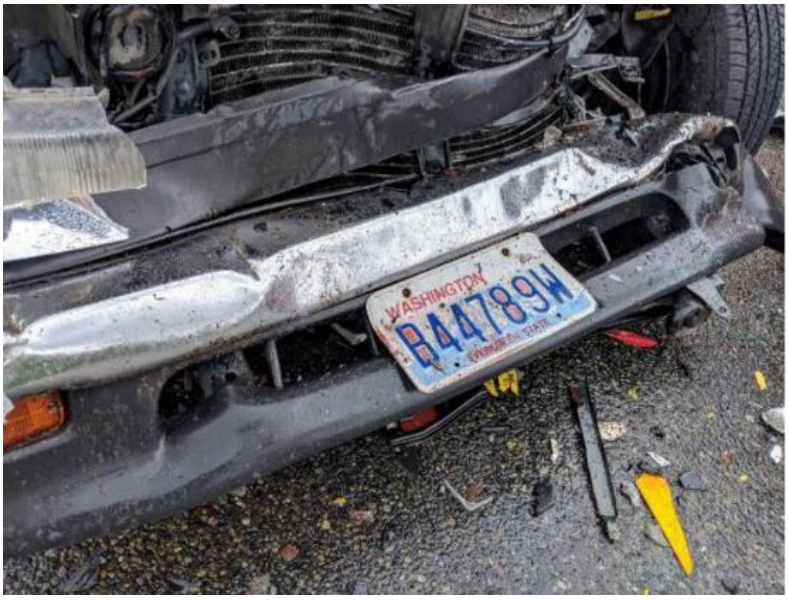




My kevlar vest never stopped a .22 bullet fired at very close range by a panicked teenager at the end of a K9 chase.



I never arrested a coworker's son for shooting up heroin, and I wasn't involved in later going to his house to take away his grandchildren to place them with CPS.



I never got the opportunity to actually kick in a locked door or break in a window. Although both were on my bucket list, other officers beat me to it on the rare occasions when force like that was required.



I never quickly turned around in my patrol car to catch a driver with a suspended license only to see him try to flee and crash into a motorcyclist, killing him instantly. Yes, the innocent motorcyclist.



I never felt with my hand the last breath ever escape from a dying man's chest as he wore my handcuffs. Naked, and overdosed on cocaine.



I never revived an opiate overdose victim with Narcan/Naloxone, and I never used a defibrillator to jump start a stopped heart.

I was never an undercover officer secretly pretending to be a bad guy, who then got caught by dirty cops one night, having to answer with a gun in my mouth if I was actually a cop or not.



I never got to throw (or shoot) flash bang grenades into a drug house.



I never arrested anybody famous, I never caught any really super villainous bad guys, and I never responded to or investigated a multiple-victim homicide crime scene.



I never flew out of state to escort a fugitive prisoner back for a special extradition.

I didn't have to dispatch a live but disemboweled deer impaled on an iron cemetery fence after a failed jump attempt. And then figure out how to get it off the fence.



I never pulled a suicide jumper out of the water onto a police boat after they survived a jump off a high bridge.



I never went to a violent crime scene where blood was dripping through the ceiling into the room below.



I never totaled or rolled a police car.



I never rammed a fleeing car off the road, and I never even got to deploy tire spikes to stop a bad guy fleeing in a car.



I never talked a suicidal jumper off of a ledge or bridge.



I never frantically cut a seatbelt off an injured occupant in a burning car.



I never delivered a baby in an emergency roadside childbirth.

I never booked a prisoner into the jail who then chose to hang themselves in their cell instead of facing a judge.



I never stopped a stolen car at gunpoint that turned out to be not a stolen car full of criminals, but the original owners of the car that wasn't actually stolen anymore.



I never had to confront a man armed with two knives hiding behind a police car in the police car parking lot at night with a suicide note pinned to his chest



I didn't see the car crash where a tree came down onto a convertible car on a warm sunny day; one large limb came down on the driver's head, splitting it open and blowing blood and brains just everywhere, including on his wife who was (physically) not hurt next to him.



I never met a person actually wearing an aluminum foil hat.

I never tackled a crazy man who had just lit a fire in his driveway; made of garage stuff and gasoline. While the neighbors watched and recorded on their phones, the man was tackled before he could run inside the house, and while resisting arrest, the fire spread to the officer's police car.



I never watched helplessly as a distraught suicidal man put a gun to his head and pulled the trigger.



I never had to hurriedly discuss with other officers who should confront the angry retired drunk cop in the woods, planning a suicide/murder with a handgun. In that case, the new young officer decided it would be easiest for him to shoot the old cop, since they had never worked together.



I never had my work emails copied for the news media to scrutinize.



I never had a handcuffed prisoner escape from my custody. From the back of my patrol car.



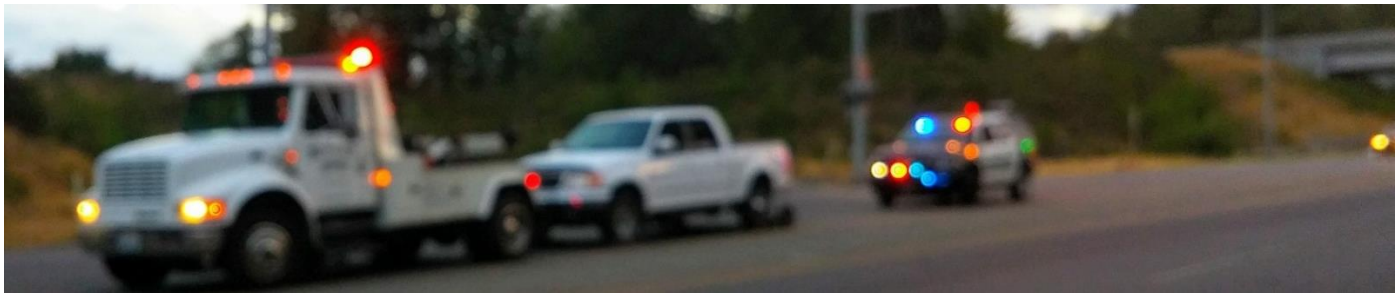
I never arrested and booked a guy into the jail who was wearing an elf costume. Or a boy scout leader shirt.



I never pulled over a driver only to see him take off suddenly, and then shoot himself in the head while being pursued.



I never heard a fatal gunshot and saw the victim a minute later in a grassy field with the top of his head blown off, still so freshly dead that the diaphragm hadn't gotten the memo yet and was still trying to breathe for the half-headless body.



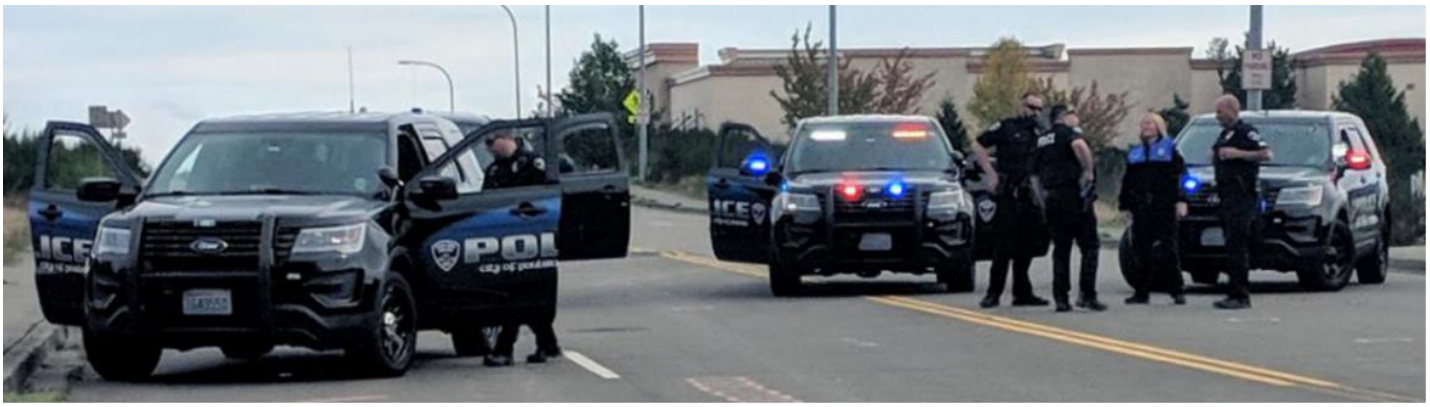
I never negotiated with a hostage taker.



I was not the cop who ran over a seal that had left the beach and wandered onto a nearby road late at night.



I never had newspaper and tv reporters file requests with my employer to get a full copy of all my personnel records, including all of my training and discipline records and evaluations.



I never had the ultimate disgrace for any cop; getting arrested and seeing my picture on the front page of multiple newspapers.





I never saw a dead guy smeared in the middle of the road at night, just a couple hours after I had talked to him.



But I personally knew officers who DID experience those things. In fact I heard countless other firsthand accounts of human experiences of every kind imaginable from other police officers, deputies, corrections officers, troopers, deputy coroners, and fire fighters – their experiences ranged from absolutely hilarious, mind boggling, mystifying and weird to completely disgusting, horrifying, and tragically scarring. If I had chosen to do more research and ask my coworkers to help contribute to this section, I could have easily added another hundred pages here – easily - with all kinds of horrific, hilarious, and tragic stories.

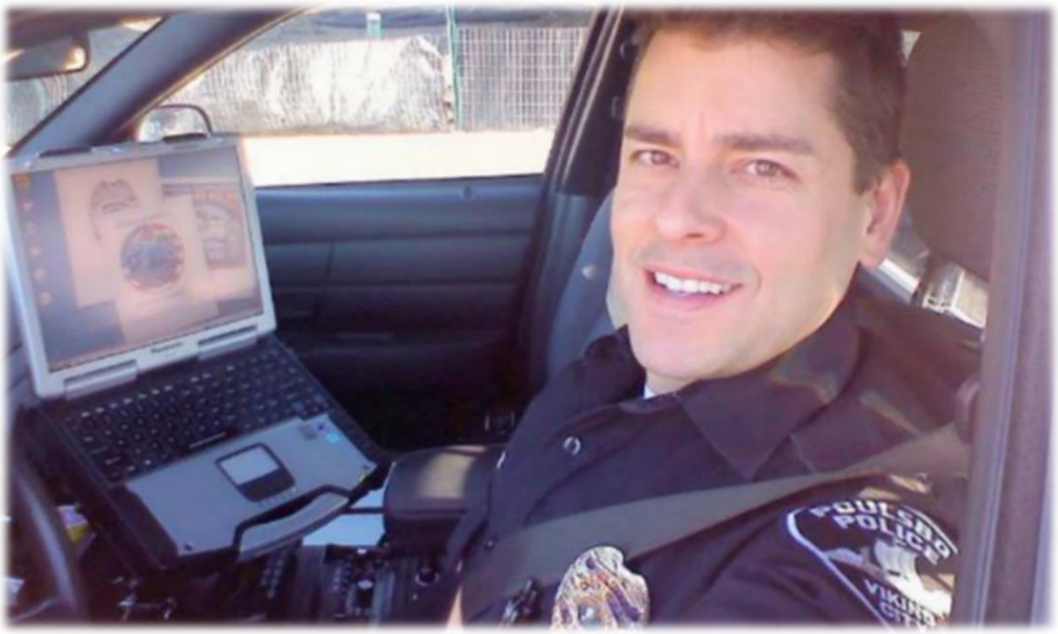


And again, I cannot emphasize enough that the experiences that I did have were in any way really any kind of unique or special. Because they weren't. They were all pretty much just the usual generic police events that happen to any and every cop who stays in this line of work long enough. Hand these pages to any other veteran cop with and you'd be surprised to see how many similar type events they've had. And it should also go without saying – but I will anyway - that if I had I spent my career in a bigger city with a higher crime rate and more police action, then I would have certainly seen even more crazy things, and at a greatly accelerated rate. Any big city cop would be able to able to easily double or triple the content that compares to the section that is coming up next. I was just a small town officer, and any badge-wearing peacekeeper from any bigger department or agency gets my profound and sincere respect because most of them, with their training and experience and danger levels, all rate in a league above mine. And lastly, what I wrote here is not just about me, but is an homage to all cops, everywhere.



Okay this ends part one: The Executive Summary. Coming up: part two...My Stories.

PART II:
MY POLICE STORIES



Whew! Crazy, huh? What you are about to read next, if you're so bored that you choose to continue, is the collection of my personally experienced personal police experiences. Non-fiction, and all true with no embellishments. With the exception of maybe half a dozen anecdotes that belong to other officers, these are all mine, first hand, and I resisted the urge to include the hundreds of other incredible and much better stories that I heard from other officers; what we have here is all limited to just the events and adventures that I was personally involved in. Every other brother and sister officer of mine can share their own stories in the ways they want, if they choose, and each and every one of them have lots and lots of incredible stories of their own.

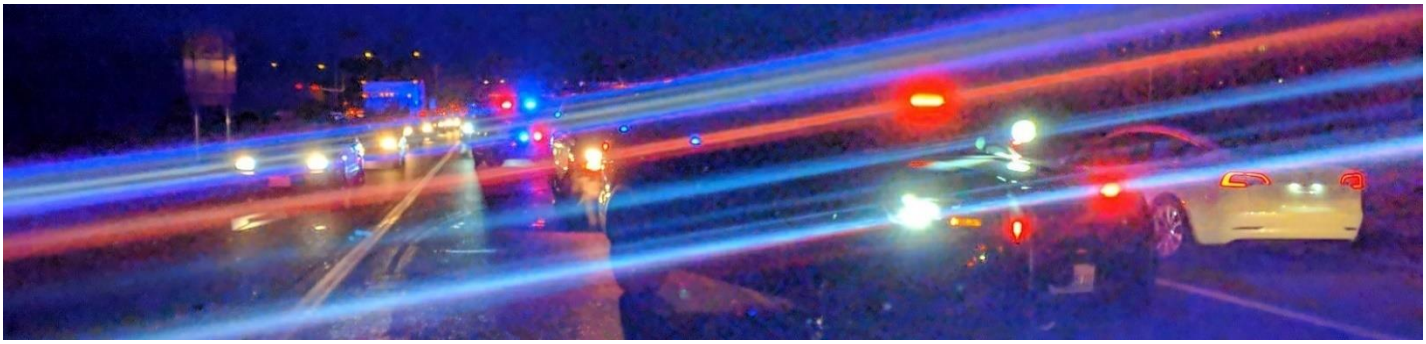





The total number of my stories that I've recorded here for posterity is somewhere around 700. This is not a complete collection; for better or worse I've forgotten way more than I've managed to remember, and there are also many stories that I remember too well but will remain forever unshared.




Again, I have to readily acknowledge that any cop with a comparable number of years, but in a bigger city, would have a ton more interesting stories that I would not be able to match in any way. I also make no pretenses or claims that my stories are in any way bigger or better or more special or unique than any other police officer's stories; my collection here is what I consider to be a pretty typical assortment and can't compare to what cops have to deal with in places like Baltimore or Chicago or Los Angeles, or New York City etc. - I was just a patrol cop from a municipality that was small enough to be more accurately described as a town. I never worked any homicide cases, I was never on a SWAT team, I never went undercover, or worked on an explosive ordnance disposal team or dive team or air unit or gang unit or hostage negotiation or rescue unit or sniper team and so if you're looking for super exciting stories, you might be disappointed here. It's okay, I know I was, frequently.

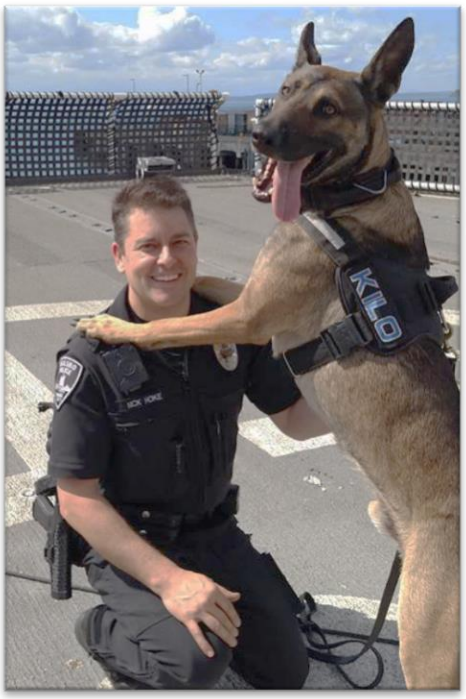


I apologize in advance for the deviant sentence structures of a lot of these recountings; standard rules of grammar have pretty much been shot to shit and I yes, I'm well aware that I interchangeably mix and match present and past tenses with no apparent rhyme or logical reason. Sometimes I made efforts to correct and mitigate but for the most part if you just go with the flow it shouldn't bother you.

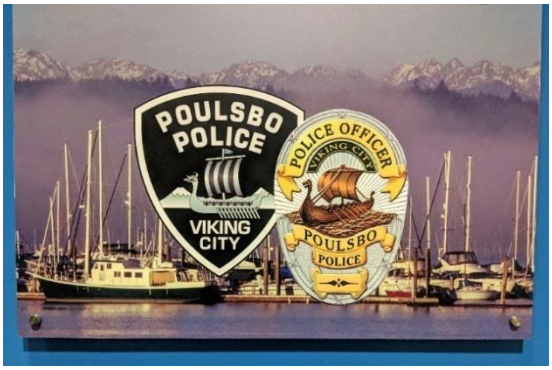
If you think this whole thing is very work-centric, you're absolutely right. This is just - and only - my police stuff. My personal life, and other jobs and adventures, is a whole separate body of work that is even longer than this mess.







Please note that the accompanying photos are almost all completely random and will not correspond in any coherent way to what you'll be reading because I was almost always too busy to photograph the events that I was actively involved in at the time, of course, and therefore I don't have a photo to match every scene. I also took relatively few pictures during the first half of my career, which I regret now because it would be quite entertaining to look back and see what those experiences (and cars, and officers, and uniforms) all looked like back in the 20th century.







Every photo that I did take and save and present here for your viewing pleasure, tells a story (at least to me) and the vast majority of them deserve to be displayed in a much bigger format and in a higher resolution than what you'll see on your screen. But nobody in the world wants to slog through that many pages; and this is already way too long already. For what it's worth, I did not include all of my police-related photos – literally hundreds in my digital vault collection are omitted from this work. I highly recommend that you read these pages in a single-page per screen format, displayed literally as big as possible on a PC instead of a cell phone screen so you can appreciate what's going on in the photographs; there are a lot of hidden gems here.





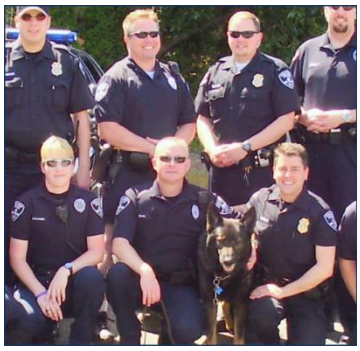
The time frame of all these stories and pictures spans 27 years - from 1993 to 2020. Nothing is shown chronologically or categorically; it's all completely random and is an accurate representation of my organizational skills. If some stories make you cringe and wince and suspect some laws or at least department policies must have surely been blatantly violated, there's a pretty good chance that those particular stories are from three decades ago when there were less laws and my police department's always-growing and increasingly-restrictive policy manual was not yet over 600 pages long, full of thou-shalts and shalt-nots.





Alright, still with me? Looks like we're going to dive in here then. Lastly, let me prepare you…some stories are funny, some are the complete opposite of funny, and a few will be shockingly horrific with no warning. Welcome to what was my world:






A citizen had called 911 to report an injured opossum was out by the curb in front of their house. And he wanted the police to do something about it. Now I had never met an injured opossum, but it sounded like nothing I wanted any part of because honestly, what is one supposed to do with an injured – and presumably viciously angry – didelphimorphia marsupial? So I readily let the other officer on duty answer up for that call. He went out there with a reserve officer and short time later they came back and reported that it was actually a hedgehog, not really injured, just a little dazed, so they picked it up off the pavement and set it free in the nearby woods. Mission Accomplished. "Uh, guys, you know hedgehogs aren't indigenous to this, uh, continent?" They looked at me blankly so I had to keep explaining. "There are no wild hedgehogs around here. That was somebody's pet you just put out in the wild to starve. Or be eaten." Slowly the looks on their faces gave me an indication they were realizing what they'd done. "Not only was that a pet," I continued, "That was an expensive exotic pet! They don't sell those things in Petco! Sheesh! C'mon, have you two ever seen an actual wild hedgehog around here? Ever? Anywhere?!" Hmm..I wish I had gone out on that call after all to save the poor little lost Head Chog. And by the way, what kind of a moron calls 911 and can't tell the difference between a hedgehog and a possum?







A man suicided himself in bed with a revolver to the head, creating a Pulp Fiction scene in his bedroom with exploded brain and blood and tissue and skull pieces splattered just everywhere. Literally. On all four walls, the floor, the ceiling, and even bits bounced and ricocheted behind furniture. No suicide note left behind, which was disappointing. I had to wait in his apartment for two hours for the coroner to show up. I was too weirded out to sit down anywhere so I just stood around, marveling at the selfish and godawful mess the guy had made in his bedroom.

I was in my patrol car, parked alongside the road, looking for drivers not wearing their seatbelts. Along comes this grandma driving her car in the traffic and I can clearly see she is not buckled up. She looks like she's about 130 years old. She's got her seat jammed as far forward as it can go so the steering wheel is right in her face; close enough that if the airbag ever deploys she'll get smashed to death between it and the seat but when you're only 4 feet tall you run of options I guess and she's got a cigarette in her mouth, she looks like she had probably started the habit when she was a young girl and her first husband went to off to war in Europe and died in the trenches and why stop now? I get in behind her, turn on my emergency lights, and pull her over. She knows damn well she should be buckled in, so she grabs her seatbelt and tries to put it on, but she has a problem. But she's got a solution, and does the best she can in the limited time she has. I walk up to the car and see she's now got her belt on, sort of. But it's not looped into the holder thing up by the shoulder post; the belt is coming straight up from the side of the floor and it's all slack. Because at some point, grandma had decided to just cut that stupid buckle off. Like, with scissors. You know, as one does. Which made the whole seatbelt loop not a loop anymore, because the top half of the belt of course got sucked into the retractor spool thing built into the side of the B pillar behind her shoulder and that part of the belt is gone forever now. But the other half was still connected to the floor. But with no buckle. So great grandma grabbed that loose end and pulled it up onto her as I walked up to the car. And she had it casually.. tucked into...uh...the front of her blouse. Still very slack. Just kind of tucked into the front center of her blouse, like "close enough, maybe the officer won't notice." Well guess what, I did notice. Although I spent a good 5 or 10 seconds just staring, trying to figure out what the hell I was seeing; half the seatbelt was gone and the other half was limply going into her shirt. I introduced myself and made the requisite inquiry, asking her to help me figure out what I'm seeing. Oh now, the jig is up! Great Great Grandma is caught! So she pulls the cut end out of her blouse. She concedes there is a minor problem with her seatbelt. "Well, it just....it just snapped..one day!" she explained to me, in a tone like, "This darn seatbelt, it just went and fell apart on me all by itself for no reason!" Did I issue her a ticket? Nope. I didn't bother. I figured if you're a 130 year old chain smoking woman who is the kind of driver to just cut a troublesome seatbelt off, then a silly little traffic ticket is certainly not going to change your mind in the slightest. And you all are in luck today because yes, this story actually does have a matching photo, because the second I saw it I knew I'd have to record this visually for you all:





Me, off duty. Walking into a Home Depot. Very scraggly unshaven long-haired Jesus-looking dude was walking out, and he was looking at me funny. Which caused me to look at HIM funny since I was a little weirded out. So we got into a staring contest of sorts until he burst out laughing and identified himself as a cop I knew from a neighboring department. When I had seen him last he had been clean cut, but then he got the undercover gig and to look the part he let it all grow out so he would blend in with all the other dirtbags and drug dealers. He explained he enjoyed staring at cops he knew to make them feel uncomfortable, knowing that almost none of them would be able to recognize him.



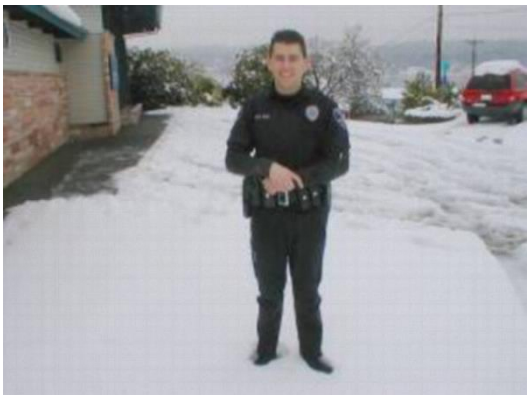




The woman who came to the PPD front counter, very upset that people were trolling her email inbox with very crude and harassing content. She was a webhost for a woman's empowerment website that featured, uh, user-submitted pictures of vaginas.

Me in an apartment parking lot, trying to calm down a large man. He was only 25 years old but he weighed at least 400 pounds. I was able to accurately gauge his weight because he had no shirt on. His 79-inch gut was just hanging out over his large belt that was about ready to explode off. Dude had a giant tattoo on his chest; right above his giant man-boobs. The tat read, in fancy script font: "DEATH BEFORE DISHONOR". Uhhh.....?





Walmart store security guard called 911 to report a suspicious-as-hell guy in the store, loading up a cart with expensive electronics to steal. The guy caught on to the nearby security guard watching him so he ditched the cart and escaped into the parking lot, where I caught up to him and started some questioning. He whipped out his cell phone, put it on record, and held it up my face; lens side out. "You recording me?" I asked. "Yes I am, because this is police harassment!" To his disappointment, I didn't turn around and leave. I pointed to my bodycam and said "Well sir I'm recording you too, so that's fair." I eyed his baggy clothes. "While I'm talking to you, I need to know if you have any weapons hidden on you," I said. "No, I don't have any weapons...uh...except for a couple knives.." I sighed. "Well that counts," I replied. "I'm going to remove them from you for a little while so nobody gets hurt." I then admonished him to not move his hands, as I removed, the first knife, the second knife, and then a third and then a fourth fucking knife from his pockets. The best part though- as he kept loudly complaining about how he was being harassed by the police for no reason, and while he was still recording video on his phone, was when a fifth, brand new big knife in a large clamshell packaging fell out of his coat onto the ground. Followed by another brand new stolen knife. At which point I stopped and just stared at him. The other officer with me asked him "Why are those still in their packaging?" The suspect stared down at them. "Uh, because I haven't taken them out yet." I asked him if he had a receipt. He said no. He then had to admit that yeah, he had just stolen them. I think he turned off his video recording around that time. And decided to stop with the big complaining act about being harassed. And then the handcuffs went on. And he went to jail. I told him later that if he wanted to put his little video on YouTube that would be fine with me. He said he didn't want to.







75 year old man lived in the run-down trailer park. The kind of trailer park that is mostly old cheap single wides, 40 to 60 years old. Or, in mobile home years, 230. Old guy is not right in the head. Severely mentally ill. His thing was to call 911 and complain about the loud bass noise coming into his house. He'd call all the time. The first 26 times we went out there we heard nothing; after that we stopped responding. We tried telling him that there was no actual audible noise but he always refused to answer his door to talk to us and listen to reason. One time I did talk to him face to face and he said the loud bass was coming from his next door neighbors; they were teenagers who didn't care about his feelings or his sleep and they had a bass machine that creates inaudible sound waves and vibrations that go 100 miles straight down and they were going to cause an earthquake and we had to do something about it. He said he can feel the vibrations in his body and if I went next door and put my hand on their door I'd feel the vibrations too. I told him that if the vibrations are not audible, then it's not a crime and not worthy of a 911 call for a police response. He disagreed and insisted he had a constitutional right to call 911 as often as he wants. I was not able to change his mind. He kept calling 911 a lot. He was too crazy to be charged with the crime of false reporting and wasting our time. I felt bad for the poor 911 dispatchers who had to keep taking his angry calls.





The time I pulled over a motorcyclist and he just went sideways on me with a ranting wild verbal tirade that lasted 8 minutes. I got it all on video on my bodycam. It was just epic. He was complaining about police, state taxes, cops, federal taxes, law enforcement, municipal taxes, municipal cops, building permits, code inspectors, sheriff's deputies, health inspectors, the department of transportation, and the state legislators. Like I said, it was epic. I just wanted to tell him to put some turn signal lights on his bike, that's all. Apparently my pulling him over put him over critical mass and he just lost it..for 8 solid minutes.

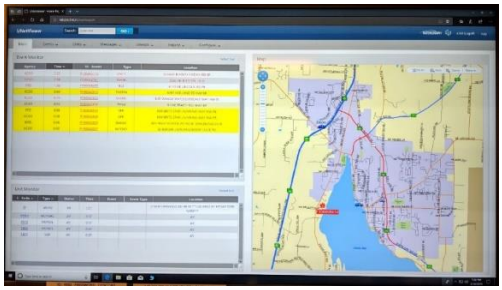






A deputy coroner, accompanied by a chaplain, is commenting to me how social media has made his job a bit more difficult; in the old days he usually had plenty of time to locate a deceased person's next of kin before anybody else could find out and beat him to it. But in the age of Facebook, with witnesses and bystanders posting rumors and information online, he had to move a lot quicker. Case in point: I had just been dealing with a very distraught woman in our front lobby, who was looking for her missing daughter and was now seeing online that there had been a suicide in a public place and she was suspecting it was her daughter and she needed answers and she was freaking out and her daughter was not answering her phone and we were trying to placate and stall her the best we could while waiting for the coroner and chaplain to arrive and then they could explain it all to her that yes, that dead woman found in the college bathroom was indeed her daughter.







Quite animated tall lanky homeless guy in the Starbucks, telling me and a couple other officers that there is definitely a dead guy in the woods. One of his old alcoholic homeless friends, alone in a tent. Last saw him alive a couple weeks ago, at the beginning of a hot August. So we go tromping through the woods. The odor and stench of fermented dead human body decomposition was thick in the air and putrid from literally several hundred feet away, which is what you can call Not a Good Sign. The extremely large, overweight dead guy in the tent was in an advanced state of decay; most of the face was rotted and melted off into black goo, exposing the skull. The pale corpse skin was peeling and greenish/greyish/bluish, covered with maggots and flies. The body was extremely bloated, looking ready to pop. The stench was unbelievably horrible. One of the absolute worst dead things I'd ever seen. The new officer with me had been a career military special forces operator and combat vet; he was completely unfazed by the smell. His written police report documenting the scene included a skillful usage of the word "emulsified."





Wednesday. Court day for various misdemeanor offenses. I'm watching motor vehicle traffic outside city hall, watching all the dirtbag criminals, both accused and prior convicted, arriving for their court appearances. One of them is not wearing his seat belt; that's easy pickings for me. I pull him over in front of the city hall and sure enough, he's got a court appearance. He says he's running late, he's on the docket and has to check in with his public defender. His passenger, some lady, offers to go in and check him in. I say sure. I check the dude's name and found out that he had been served a court order to stay away from his ex-girlfriend because she got tired of being stalked by him. I look her up and realize it's the same gal who had just been sitting in the passenger seat. He denied that was her; he gave me a made up girlfriend name but I had a good DOL photo of the court order petitioner and sure enough, she was the same gal who had just been in the car with him. She of course took off and I never saw her again. So I wrote up new charges against the guy for violating the order. Oh, what had he been going to court for? Uh, violating that order another time before I had caught him. So, uh, here's an idea: If you're going to court because you got in trouble seeing your ex-girlfriend again, after the judge specifically ordered you not to, then, uh, you should probably not have her with you when you go to court again after getting caught violating that. Especially if and when the police department is in the same building as the courtroom. That one was so ridiculous I went into the court and told his public defender to expect ANOTHER court case with that client. The public defender just shook his head and sighed.





The one about the guy I ticketed for driving with a suspended license; he later tried to convince the judge that he wasn't "driving" his truck, because it was broken down in the intersection. (which it was) The judge agreed with me that since he was in the driver's seat behind the steering wheel..then yes, uh, he was.."driving." Conviction upheld.

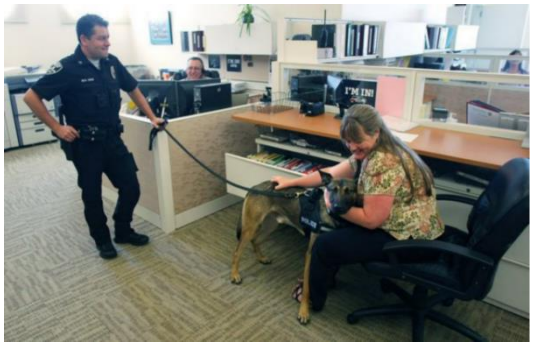






I show up for work at 6 am and relieve the night shift guys. They had a busy shift that included a bar fight; a victim was robbed at knifepoint and got a slashed forehead. Drug deal gone bad. Suspect fled from the police; a K9 track was started but when it became clear that the victim wanted no part of the police getting involved, everything stopped. (no victim = no crime) Back in the office, I show up, and the night shift guys are still muddy from scuffling with another suspect and then one of them notices a large clump of hair snaggled up in the gear on his vest; pretty good proof he had gotten physical with somebody. We all laughed and cringed as he pulled the large hair clump of long hair off of his handcuff case and threw it away.

Grocery store manager called 911 to report a very upset customer who couldn't find coffeemate. Angry customer had left in a huff, threatening to come back with a gun. I respond to the scene and I spent the next few hours stressing out about the possibility the guy would actually return with a gun. Turns out he didn't, but it still ruined what should have been a calm Saturday shift for me, since I would have had to be the guy do something about it if he did come back with a gun.





25 year old young man posts a suicide note on Facebook, writes another one at home, leaves his car keys behind, and walks away. Family, friends, and police go searching for him. The next morning I found him. In the back of an ambulance with a self-inflicted gunshot wound in his head. He got airlifted to Harborview Hospital in Seattle. Lived. But no longer right in the head.




Pro Tip for you professional shoplifters out there: If you're going to help yourself to expensive clothing in boutiques, don't use a large plastic handbag THAT IS MADE OF CLEAR PLASTIC to hide your merch. And if you do actually do that, don't go back an hour later to the same store you already shoplifted from; the clerks will SEE THE STUFF YOU HAD STOLEN FROM THEM.





On several occasions I was at the police station talking to a very upset citizen who had been complaining about their mortal enemy – a neighbor or ex-spouse or whatever – and after sending them on their way, usually upstairs to the municipal court clerks to go file a court order, their mortal enemy would walk in less than minute later to complain about *their* mortal enemy, who was of course the person I had just been talking to. I'll be always amazed we didn't have more shootouts in our front lobby from people at war with each other.

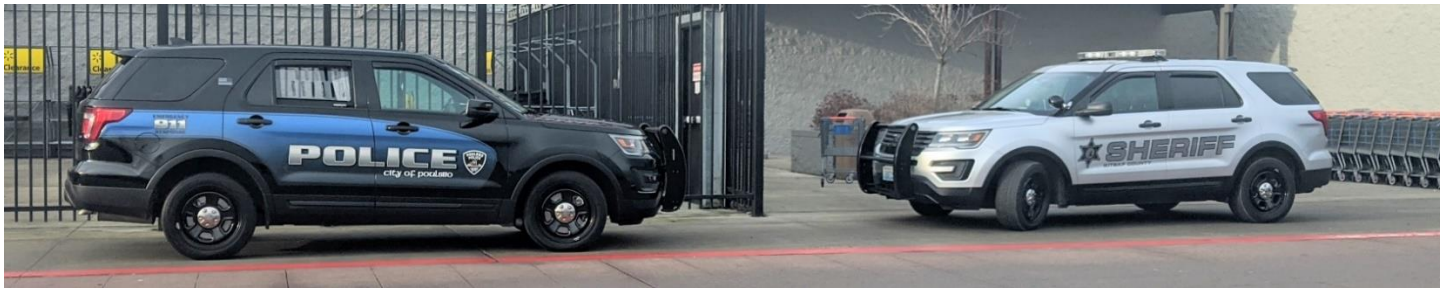








Me, spending 45 minutes of my life in an old lady's apartment again listening to her cry and ramble and complain about life, and her neighbors. Every time I suggested a solution she waved me off and kept venting. After a half hour I realized that was all she wanted; just somebody to listen. Without offering suggestions about how to improve her life. Because then what would she have to complain about?



The young lady in labor who didn't want the hospital to know her real name. Thought making up a fake name to use on her new baby's birth certificate wouldn't, you know, cause any problems at all later on? She had lied because she had a warrant for her arrest. Which I gotta tell ya, the hospital staff is 1) not going to know about or find out and 2) not going to care in the slightest anyway. Here's an idea: it's called Just Use Your Real Name.







The teenager who overdosed on synthetic marijuana one day; his mother called 911. I got there and the kid was upright, but in total zombie mode. A couple hours later, he was in a coma. When he rejoined the land of the living a couple weeks later, he had lost a bit of brain function. Permanently.





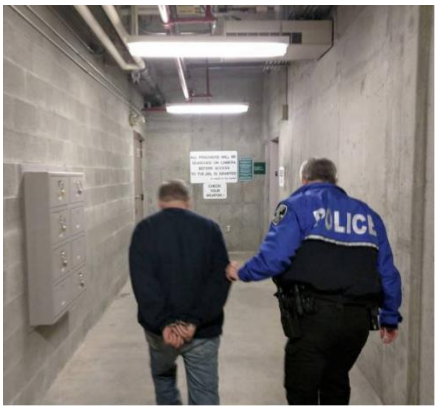
3 am: Quiet night shift. Then some whining millennial calls the police to complain his baby mama is committing adultery with some other guy! And so he wants her arrested! Or something!

The woman who shot herself with a unique, rare antique 4 barrel pistol. She learned if you want to do it right and actually die you need to aim higher than the bladder. Otherwise you're just going leak bloody urine all over the floor with a new hole in your gut. It hurt so much she only fired the gun once; leaving the other three barrels unused.





Me, at another suicide scene. Middle aged guy chose the very risky tactic of shooting himself in the heart with a very large revolver. It actually worked perfectly though; the bullet was aimed up under his ribcage and it hit his heart just right, shredding it into jello. He died so fast he didn't even close his eyes. Lit cigarette still in one hand. Still sitting upright in his recliner.


Me, at a car crash scene. Nothing actually too exciting but I enroute there I had a massive adrenaline dump and now my body was trying to digest it all, and not doing well, because a couple minutes into the event I get the shakes real bad, that I can't control it. Shivering so bad it made me feel ridiculously cold and lost some fine motor skills while trying to write. I had to go sit down in my car with the heat on full blast for a couple minutes to recover. I'd say that happened to me about 5 times during my career; mostly in the first few years. Super inconvenient. The last time was so long ago I can't even remember; it was mostly a rookie thing. I also definitely got for-reals tunnel vision at least a couple times, during very intense situations.




Homeless guy, mid 20's, schizophrenic, randomly yelling at people as he was walking through town. I took him to jail. He said he knew he was schizophrenic. I asked him if he was taking his medication. He said his religion would not allow medication. He was a Christian Scientist. I had a lot of other questions but I didn't ask. I did tell him that he needed a new religion though, because obviously thoughts and prayers weren't helping him enough.




A very mentally ill woman wandered into town and found herself in a candle shop downtown on Front Street. She was doing the usual crazy person crazy talk to the shop owner, and then she decided to help herself to some of the goods there. Specifically, she went for a couple of the large scented candles that were burning. She dipped her hands into the hot wax and smeared it onto her clothes. And her hair. And her face. I showed up, and after seeing all the dried wax on her clothes, her hair, and face, determined that she was probably not right in the head. So I took her to the place where crazy people go. I gotta say though, she was the best smelling client I had ever put in my back seat.





The toddler who unintentionally defenestrated himself and got an airlift to the hospital. His parents were just a mess. I think he turned out okay though. Little kids are bouncy.





I get called out to (another) dead person scene. She was only fifty something years old but I could see from all the prescription pill bottles everywhere that she had some significant health issues. (My all-time record was one decedent who had twenty-six different prescriptions – when I lined them all up to take a picture even the responding deputy coroner was impressed) Anyway, this dead woman had keeled over into the tub with the water going. Fortunately she was still clothed and the drain was open, so there was no water overflowing out onto the floor and it was just the sound of the water going for about a day that caught the attention of the neighbors in her apartment complex. I always wondered how much information the deputy coroner gave to her next of kin. But I never cared enough to really ask. Did he tell them she had a heart attack and dropped dead, or did he go into details, which in this case would have been: "It looks like she had a major diarrhea attack all over the bathroom floor and then slipped in it and crashed down onto the tub while the water was going, in the process she grabbed for and ripped the towel rack off the wall and also pulled the shower curtain down onto her, and we're still trying to figure out how bad she hit her head in the tub, and if she drowned face first in the tub or if the heart attack killed her before she got her head wet." Sometimes I still think about that one. I know she had wanted to donate her body to the University of Washington med school but when they were called and found out she'd already been dead for half a day without any temperature control they politely declined her offer; I guess they like their dead folks pretty fresh.





911 is called. I'm dispatched. I go to the complainant's house. Guy there explains he was working in his garage/shop. A weirdo walked in from the street, came into the guys' garage, and asked "Do you have a daughter?" Turns out the weirdo was the car thief I had been looking for. When we found him a short time later in his car, he ran from us and we had to chase him.







One time I went to superior court for a criminal case where a burglar we had caught in a homeowner's storage shed one night was going to try and convince a jury that he was not actually a burglar, he was just out walking one night, it started to rain, and he wanted to keep dry for a bit. He had got caught by the police after the homeowner and a neighbor had cornered him in the shed; the homeowner had just happened to have video surveillance in his back yard and just happened to notice the bad guy lurking around on the screen, at 2 in the morning. So bad guy went to jail. A few months later at trial time as I as was leaving the station to go the courthouse, I casually mentioned to my sergeant what the case was. "Harley? That guy?" the sergeant said. "Bainbridge Island police are looking for that guy! He recently did a burg in a house and came face to face with the resident in the kitchen, and then ran out. Resident picked him out of a photo lineup. BIPD has been looking for him!" "Well he's going to be in court in about an hour," I replied. The sergeant picked up the phone. "I'm calling BIPD and letting their detectives know about this," he said with a grin. I went to court to prepare for the trial. The Bainbridge detectives also showed up and had a meeting with the suspect's lawyer and informed him that his client was clearly guilty in another residential burglary and they were going to pass this along to the prosecutor. The prosecutor was ecstatic. The bad guys' lawyer was stunned. I was then told to standby, a big plea deal was in the making. Ten minutes later the prosecutor comes back to her office where I was quietly waiting and she was beaming. "We just made a deal with Harley," she said. "He's going to prison for ten years." I was stunned now. "What? He's pleading guilty to the burglary?" She was gathering papers up from her desk in a rush. "He's pleading to TWO burgs in exchange for a slightly lighter sentence. His lawyer doesn't want either of these cases to come in front of a jury." She found the forms she was looking for and ran out again. "The judge is going to approve and sign this now." And I sat back and thought how hilarious this was – this bad guy probably thought he was going to be able to beat the shed burglary charge. The jury would believe him, or have enough doubt to acquit him, and he'd be home in time for dinner. He certainly wasn't expecting to get hit with another burglary case today; that really threw his world upside down. The prosecutor came back several minutes later for some more paperwork. "He asked if he could go home for a couple days to get his affairs in order." She laughed. "I said no way. Go directly to jail." She left again and I reveled in the moment- it was just about the best way to end a day in court – I didn't have to testify on the stand and face any kind of a cross examination, and the bad guy pleads guilty. I really liked the part about how he was going to prison instead of going home. This led to a lot of questions, like: What happens to all of his stuff? What's it like to suddenly be deprived of one's liberty for ten years? No good hamburgers, no alcohol, no women, no movie theatres, no video games....for...ten....long...years....! I imagined him calling home, or one of his friends: "Hey, um, Joe. Listen, can you do me a solid, I need you to take care of my stuff for uh, a little while. Like, um, ten years or so. Maybe you could just box it all up for me and store it in your garage?" And I imagined Joe saying "Yeah, sure man no problem" and Joe would then immediately announce to all his dirtbag associates "Yaaaaard sale at Harley's place! Everything he ever stole and still has is now freeeeeeee!" And Harley's place would have been cleaned out within hours. Joe would get a call a couple days later: "Hey man, Harley here. I'm getting transferred to the state pen tomorrow. Say, did you get my stuff taken care of? Hello? Hello?"










The time I tackled a drunk idiot to the ground and as I was cuffing him, became dismayed to discover he had a lot of diarrhea on the outside of his pants. And on my handcuffs. And on my hands.





“You can’t arrest me, my uncle is the governor!” The guy wearing my handcuffs was serious; his uncle actually, literally was the state governor at the time. But the suspect’s five-year old stepson had a mark on his forehead from the ring on the guy’s hand when he had punched the kid in the face, so off to jail he went. I’m not cool with people punching little kids in the face.




Teen driver crashed dad’s car and fled the scene. I found the car, called dad, told him to call son and have him come back to the scene. I didn’t care so much about the crashing part, it was the fleeing and leaving behind a mystery crashed car that irked me. Dad calls me back and reported his son was saying somebody else stole the car and must have crashed it. I tell dad witnesses report seeing his son flee the scene and son better come back and not tell me some BS story about a car thief. Dad convinces son to walk back to the scene. The boy tries to give me a BS story about how somebody else must have stolen the family car and crashed it. I had been a cop longer than that kid had been alive so I did not buy his story for a second.




The woman who had a car wheel come off - while she was driving at 40 mph - and go bouncing away down into the woods. “Not my day,” she said. “The health district also just gave me a failing grade on my restaurant.” Me: “Oh, that’s interesting. Say..ah..which restaurant would this be?”






Man walks in to work one morning, demands a meeting with corporate human resources lady. He tells HR he's done and wants to retire. And he wants a company credit card issued to him with no limit, so he can buy things he needs. He promises not to go crazy with it; he'll use it just for groceries and stuff in the future. Indefinitely. Yep; it's certified crazy talk. The man…was one of our police clerks. He just went and lost his mind one day. He got sent home and yeah..definitely lost his job.





Local resident in his 70's had a cardiac arrest in his house, serious enough to kill him. Looked like it had started in his bathroom and ended in the living room. Fun fact: sometimes when you have a cardiac arrest it can be accompanied by a diarrhea episode. And if you're in a lot of distress and running around clutching your heart, you might not care (or know) that you're smearing and flinging runny shit all over the floor. And walls. The whole fresh stinky scene was a bit worse for me because I had personally known the guy for quite a few years. His friend showed up and told me that they had just had breakfast at a local diner. My only question was wanting to know exactly what kind of greasy food the dead guy had ordered that had killed him.





Robbery scene at a fast food restaurant: young man with a hood and gun made off with several thousand dollars. He was never identified or caught. Several years later, another robbery at a gas station mini-mart, again the suspect (totally different guy) got a clean getaway. The more I think about it, the more I think those two robberies were totally staged. Meaning the "victims" pre-planned it and got probably half the take for pretending to be scared when their friend showed up looking mean with an unloaded plastic gun, to get the cash belonging to the store. I mean, it sure seems like a kind of easy way to make a few thousand quick bucks.










There I was doing what you could call "working traffic", waiting for cars to blow through a stop sign in a neighborhood. It's a quiet and calm shift and I'm averaging only like one violator every 15 or 20 minutes. Then I hear a noise. A loud noise. Like a whooshing. Like somebody has just fired up a pressure washer at the house nearby. No, the sound is getting closer. Maybe it's a low flying lear jet? Louder and closer it gets and then I see it; it is of course the sound a large crumpled plastic garbage can makes when it is lodged directly underneath a moving Honda Accord. I watch as the teen driver goes past me, dragging this loud-ass plastic can that is totally jammed up underneath his car. I pull him over and he admitted that he had just intentionally swerved toward the can that had been by the side of the road, empty after the garbageman had come along. The kid had wanted to just send it flying, but instead it went under his car, got halfway there, and then got stuck. I was less than impressed. I made the kid call his mother right away to self-report his idiocy. Then I talked to his mother. Her tone was very unsatisfactory for me, because it was pretty much like "Oh my son is such a little rascal isn't he?"






Drug store manager called 911 to report a shoplifter had been in her store. Based on her description, I narrowed the list of suspects down to two known local homeless guys; both in their 20's and both addicted to heroin. Manager points to a backpack on the floor. "That's his – he was in such a hurry to get out of here after I confronted him that he left it behind." I look in the pack and find the ID to one of the dudes I had suspected, narrowing down the suspect list to one. I caught him a short time later. "Hey man, I got your backpack here!"





Dispatcher called me on the radio, advised a neighboring jurisdiction wanted to confirm if a warrant in the system was still active on a suspect they were contacting. I looked in our file cabinet, found the original paperwork signed by our judge, and confirmed it was valid. The suspect was arrested and taken to the jail for failing to appear for the 5th time, on that one warrant. Every time he got arrested, he'd promise to show up to court, and then not appear again. Seeing somebody get arrested five times for failing to appear on a charge is actually not that unusual; quite a few folks out there are slow learners. If you want to really drag out your criminal court case utilizing this method, you can delay the inevitable by a several years, if you want.





Me, knocking on a woman's door early in the morning. She answers in her bathrobe. I hand her a hubcap that had come off her car. I asked her who had been driving her car so badly that the hubcap got knocked loose. She doesn't want to answer me. We both know it was her good-for-nothing idiot son, but I don't have quite enough proof to charge him with eluding, which is what he was doing when he outran me through town, hitting a curb hard enough at one point to send the hubcap flying.

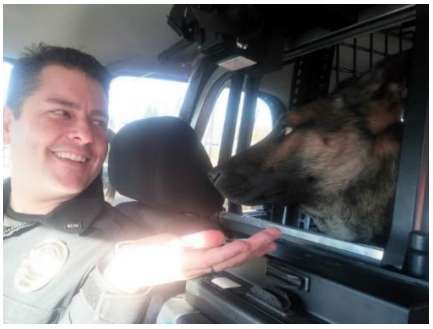




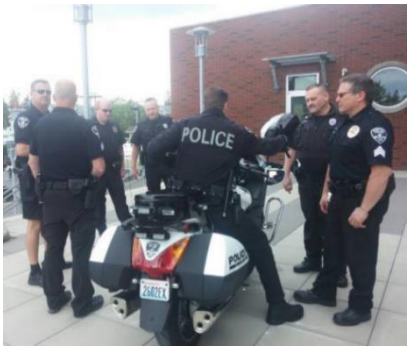
I stop a car one day for speeding; the driver and passenger are both Marines from the nearby sub base. As I call in the license plate to dispatch, I see something under the car and I can't finish reading out the plate because my jaw has dropped open. Its…a wtf…it's… a giant dead racoon. Totally jammed up underneath the car. I walk up the car and the young Marine readily admits he had hit a racoon that had run into the road; there was no way to avoid it. "Well.." I told him, "It's still with you, under your car." Driver and passenger get out to look and they're aghast to see it mashed and mangled under the car. "We'll go to our buddy's house and knock it out with a shovel in his driveway." They suggest. "Uh, better idea;" I offered. "That thing is kind of gross so I'd recommend doing some backward donuts in that bumpy dirt lot over there to dislodge it." And then I noticed that the dead racoon, smushed under the car, had left a bloody smear mark behind the car, down the road. Literally 2 miles long.







There I am investigating a homeless encampment in the woods. Large tent full of clothes and junk and crap, and most of it had been scattered outside, I guess it had got wet and needed to be dried out in the sun, but then it rained again and made the bad situation worse. The fugitive I was looking for was not there, but then I saw….the largest….biggest…most massive human poop I have ever seen in my life. Just laying there in front of the tent. I'm not even going to tell you what it was comparable in size to. I wish I could unsee it. But I can't. It will be with me forever. I wish I had just taken that day off and not gone into work.







A drunk driver was driving by braille, bouncing off curbs, making his way home. Being followed by a citizen who noted the right front tire had blown out hitting a curb, but the driver was oblivious and kept driving. I caught the driver a block from his house and arrested him. His wife showed up and she was quite surprised to see her husband over the legal BAC limit by a factor of 3; he had been doing a pretty good job of hiding his alcohol drinking from her and she did not even know he drank anything. I pointed out that him being upright and able to answer questions despite an extremely high blood alcohol content meant that he was a conditioned alcoholic.

A citizen calls 911 to report a suspicious open door at their neighbor's house. I go check it out. The homeowners had gone on vacation in their RV, and had just neglected to shut the front door all the way and the wind blew it open. I remember this event well because while looking through the house to see if there was a burglar, I saw two very interesting things: #1 was the waterbed in the master bedroom. A 1981 classic, with the dark wood canopy, solid top, covered with gold-flecked mirror tiles. If you lived in that era, you know exactly what I'm talking about. I was surprised to see a fully functional waterbed still in existence, pushing 35 years old. Then, in the basement, the #2 thing: the hot tub. That's right, a full size hot tub, indoors. In the basement. Full of water. You'd think there would be mold like crazy down in there but I didn't see any. Although the atmosphere was a bit muggy. Made me wonder what kind of activities went on in that place.






I pull over a car in front of a local business that sells plants but I won't name them to protect their good name, even though I got a little peeved when the owner stormed out to me in the middle of my traffic stop and told me to move because I was blocking their driveway, which would not be a super unreasonable request but there was actually a LOT of room for cars to go in and out past me. I told him I'd move in a couple minutes when I was done doing what I had to do. PS: If you ever want to or have to talk to a cop, please don't ever do it in the middle of a traffic stop. Because reasons.





Another traffic stop; I'm talking to the driver and I was at the front of the guys car so I could keep an eye on the traffic coming at me, cause I was pretty much on the fog line. I saw an oncoming car – a Dreyer's ice cream delivery truck - coming towards me. He was about 400 feet away and I noted with growing alarm the truck was ever so slightly drifting closer to the edge of the lane, to the right. As he got closer I could extrapolate the angle/distance/time and conclude that he was going to miss my patrol car but come very close to hitting me personally by the side of the car I had pulled over. About 150 feet away the driver corrected his course a bit to avoid me. I was making eye contact with him the whole time and he was looking at me with a funny look on his face, which I interpreted as "I'm going to mess with this cop and see if I can freak him out a bit." Meaning, I'm almost positive he was drifting toward me on purpose. I wanted to then pull HIM over but in the few seconds I had to think about it, I realized I couldn't come up with any kind of a driving offense that I could prove beyond a reasonable doubt, so I let it go. Pretty alarming and irritating though. I guess that guy had a problem with law enforcement.










There I am at a police team training for an active shooter scenario at a school. The setting: a large high school during summer break. Now traditionally, it had been standard operating procedure for patrol officers to set up containment and wait for a SWAT team to go in and combat a loose gunman, but on a national level everybody everywhere began to realize that waiting any length of time for a SWAT team to show up and deploy was ridiculous. So patrol officers were then taught to wait long enough to get a two or three man team formed and then go in and solve the active shooter situation themselves instead of waiting, but then that evolved of course into the protocol that the first officer there should just run in solo and end it ASAP. But when I went to this training, it was still the 4-man response theory. And there was a really official way to go, and that's what the training was all about. The first four officers to show up (from any police agencies) would group very close together into a diamond formation; one officer points a gun straight ahead, two officers behind him and to the sides cover the right and left side each, and one officer in back faces backward. Looks great on paper but it needs a lot of coordination and training to do in practice, because going around a corner - like in a hallway – requires a bit of leapfrogging in place, with the entire squad rotating positions. Once a team gets it figured out it's impressive to watch, but the whole afternoon we practiced this I kept thinking "There is no way that we're going to remember these dance moves if there is an actual shooting going on…we're just going to run in and not even think about all this fancy rotating around corners nonsense.." But I was able to master the technique enough though to figure out where to start out during the practice runs; after the first couple run throughs I saw which guy wound up in front at the last corner when the actor playing a gunman would be confronted down the hallway, so after that I always started out in the lead, so by the time we got to the final scene I'd have already rotated myself to the covering the rear. Not because I was a coward, but because there was just a lot of pressure on the front shooter at that final moment, since all the instructors were watching nearby then. In my career, we only did that fancy training once. I think everybody (else) eventually concluded that regular old patrol officers in an active shooter event are going to be too busy and distracted to try to remember how to tactically maintain a formation while rotating around a corner while advancing down hallways toward a gunman and so just never mind all that.







One day a large open-top trailer truck drove through town with a large load of dead fish of some kind, to be processed as fertilizer somewhere. The smell. Oh god the smell. It lingered for about 3 hours along the road. Kind of amazing, really.





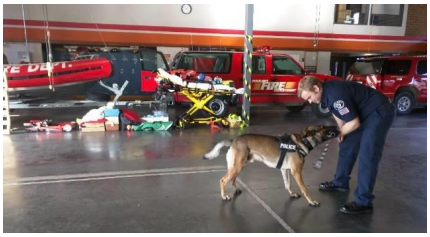
Snowy winter day. Some lady driving on a curve slides off and goes down an embankment, rolls her car upside down, and is stuck there. I come across the scene and help get her out of her car, which had landed in a mass of bushes and deep snow, fortunately had just missed landing in a nearby creek. The woman was one of my coworker's mother in law.

Marina owner called to report her decorative brass ship's propeller out in front of her place had been stolen. It was about 3 feet long and 20" across. Giant heavy sold metal thing. Of course it was stolen by scrap metal thieves. I felt sorry for the owner but not too much; she really should not have just set it out there like that; it was worth several hundred dollars, at least.






A 17 year juvenile delinquent is arrested and booked into the juvenile detention center. A day later he's released, but his father refuses to go pick him up. I get dispatched to dad's house. He tells quite adamantly "I do not want him back here. He can get placed with CPS because I am not going to go pick him up and bring him back to this house." This was not the first parent I've encountered who refused to take their kid back.


A domestic violence scene gets resolved by both the husband and wife going to jail. I drove them both at once in the back of my patrol car. The wife. Would not. STFU. The whole way there. Complete, non-stop bitching the entire way to the jail. By the end, both her husband and I were totally sick and tired of her attitude. I even yelled at her and told her that she had just set a record (not kidding BTW) for most, continuous complaining during a jail transport trip.






The drunk guy who fell off his friend's balcony one night and landed on the paved driveway. On his head. He lived, but with some of what you could call cognitive deficits after that.

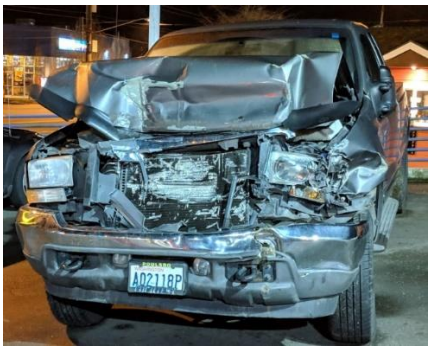




Resident in the middle of a housing development found his car's back window was broken. The cause: a .45 bullet that had hit at an angle, easily measurable enough to show the trajectory and calculate that the shooter must have been well over a mile away. Yep, this was just at the beginning of a new year; some jerk somewhere had thoughtlessly fired off at least one round from his handgun to celebrate at midnight.







The 911 call for the man yelling at his 15 year old daughter out in the street in a quiet neighborhood. I arrived and talked to the guy. Turns out he was mad because he was teaching his daughter how to drive and she had badly scraped the car's wheels on a curb. The car: a very, very expensive BMW sedan. I felt bad for the girl. I berated the dad.







The police department patrol division got several new patrol bicycles one year. Nice black Cannondales, with a cargo bag in the back. Plenty of room for me to add some heavy bricks; one each. To class them up a bit I wrapped the bricks in aluminum foil first. A couple of the bike patrol officers noticed the 4.5 pound additions right away and removed them. A couple others though did not notice and went off riding on patrol, with extra bricks as ballast. Hey, it's good resistance training.



The time I got talked into going to the mayor's party on reelection night and I had to spend some effort literally dodging the news reporter and photographer there; I finally had to explain to them that if the mayor lost the election, then I didn't want to be seen there. Guess what. The mayor lost. We got a new mayor. And guess who was clearly visible in the newspaper's published photo of the losing incumbent's party. On the front page.








Here we can see the Trash Man's house. He had just moved out. What was most interesting about this place was that there was nothing of value inside. It was all just garbage. Literally nothing in there except garbage. Ten or fifteen years' worth, easily. Trash Man was 75 years old. Yes, he lived in there like that.




It was just epically horrible. Flies and dirty cobwebs and garbage. I know, you want to see the bathroom and the bedroom. I did too, but I also didn't want to go in there more than about 3 feet so we don't get to see those parts. I'd say this house was a tie for first place for worst living conditions I've ever seen…right up there with the Rat Man's house.



I pulled a guy over for violation of the high-occupancy vehicle lane restrictions; he was driving solo. I asked him why. He thought saying “I’m going to work” was a valid, legit excuse to use the carpool lane. It, uh, totally was not.





Gas station owner calls 911 to report vandalism. Somebody, without good reason, had hit the emergency fuel shut off button and it caused all the gas pumps to stop working. As it should. It was then that the owner realized the key to reset the system was not in the gas station anywhere; the nearest one was several hours away. During which time he lost several dozen customers. He looked on the video system and saw the suspect, a teenage girl, who had hit the button on a whim apparently. He got her license plate and I tracked her down. She was very apologetic and I sympathized with her; she didn’t have any malice when she hit the button, and certainly didn’t mean for the pumps to shut down all day. She agreed to settle a civil case with the owner and compensate him for his lost revenue. I can’t offer legal advice to people so kept my mouth shut. Otherwise I would have told her that she owned him nothing since he was the one who didn’t have the key to quickly reset the pumps back to an operational status.







I’m taking a guy to jail for something, I can’t remember what now but I know I had a good reason. This was around 1994. As we get to the edge of town he sees his father driving by and he convinces me to stop so he can say goodbye to his dad and let him know he’s going to jail. Like an idiot, I oblige and stop in a parking lot and we tell the old man that son is going to jail. The dad puffs himself up, looks me in the eye and announces “You are not taking my son to jail.” I then realize I’ve put myself in a bad situation. “Okay, sir, we’ll talk about in just a minute…let me go back to my car…and…” from a backwards walk I turn into a run, jump into my ’88 Plymouth Gran Fury, and peel out of there. Dad was all bark and no bite I guess because he chose not to follow after me. My policy ever since then has been to not stop, and just go directly to jail.







A new house is being built in a neighborhood. The construction workers are actually high school kids from the high school woodshop class, supervised by the shop teacher. They’re doing a pretty good job, building an actual whole house. One day, as all the kids are in the back pounding nails and making walls, two of the boys decided they’ll fix their problems with each other by duking it out in the front of the house, away from everybody else. They go out front and start trading blows. Neighbor across the street sees what’s going on and he goes over to stop them. It was the .38 revolver tucked into waistband that really caught their attention, in addition to his proclamation about “No violence in this neighborhood!”



Three years later: that guy wanted to be a volunteer police officer. His application was immediately disqualified because he had been convicted for ending the teens fighting by showing off his gun to them and we all still remembered.





The really crazy man who called 911 at random to report imaginary crimes happening to him, like people were pouring battery acid into his ear and raping him. Those kinds of things. When he got too worked up we'd go to his house and encourage him to smoke lots of marijuana; even back in the days when it was still illegal. Because it totally calmed him down. We made an exception for him. His major claim to fame was one day when he got kicked out of a bar he got mad and drove into the bar in his truck. Literally. Drove into the bar. Killed some folks in there. He could not be tried in court because he was criminally insane. So after some time in the state psychiatric hospital, he was kind of stabilized and then set free. A couple decades later none of his neighbors knew about that. I mean they knew he was weird, but they had no idea he had a couple homicides under his belt and had never gone to prison for it. Do you know who YOUR neighbors are?





The poor kid who had his expensive tricked-out purple pickup truck stolen from a fast food restaurant while he dined inside. During broad daylight, with lots of people around. The truck was found a county away one week later off a forest service road; it had been intentionally rammed into a few trees and then finished off with an axe. Completely and utterly destroyed. When the owner came to the impound yard to identify his truck he broke down in tears and vowed to never love a car again.





The 40-year old naked autistic woman in her parent's kitchen, freaking the fuck out and slapping herself hard all over and screaming, because she was super autistic. She was not a good looking woman naked. That one caused me mental scars. And I had to go out there more than once.

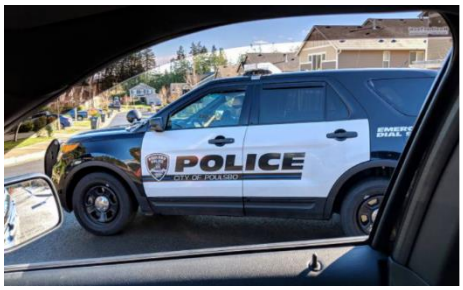






The firemen who called to report a man was being weird running circles around their fire station. Weird as in..naked. In broad daylight. I responded to the scene to help out the firefighters. Turns out the weird running man was not entirely naked; he was wearing a belt.



A motorist called 911 to report a girl had just jumped out of a moving car. I arrive, with an aid crew. The car is long gone but the girl, a 22 year old drug addict with a reputation, is still there with some very fresh and nasty looking scrapes on her hands and knees and elbows and hips, because the car had been going about 35 miles per hour and she dove out on what was essentially pavement that was moving at 35 miles hour. She would not say who was driving or why she felt like she had to leave the car so quickly. When it became clear that she was no snitch, I stopped caring so much about trying to find out who was driving. Off to the hospital she went.





Lady had her car stolen. About a month later it was found, abandoned in a park and ride lot out in the county. I called her. “Hey good news we found your car!” She was not happy to get her old crappy car back. “Noooooooo! My insurance company was two days away from writing it off and sending me a big check!”

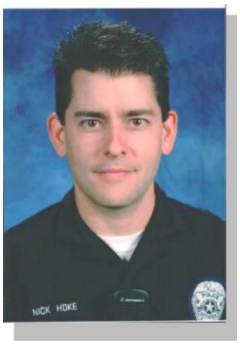




Me, at a lady’s front door with some Animal Control Officers, talking to the her about how it sure is funny how’s she’s been taking her dog to so many different veterinarians to get pain pills. For “the dog.” The husband wandered by the front door, saw what was going on, and kept walking away; he wanted no part of it. Wife denied any shenanigans. She was a liar.

The driver who had an actual real metal license plate issued from…The Kingdom of Heaven. Totally not legit. Also his drivers license was issued by the Kingdom of Heaven. Also not legit. I'm still mad at myself that I didn't note the expiration date on his drivers license. That's probably an important date to be aware of, seeing how it was issued from the Kingdom of Heaven. When I had asked him for his proof of insurance he quoted me some psalm. Which did not constitute legal proof of insurance. I issued him a whole bunch of tickets. Oh and I took those license plates off his car, too.





High school kid got a really vague trolling text on his phone from a classmate playfully messing with him, asking him to pick a number or else. Kid freaks out, thinks a shooter is going to take him or his friends out. His mother immediately pulls him out of class, picks him up from school and brings him to the PD for a police investigation. "Uh, you know there's a school resource officer stationed at your school right now, right?" I offered. Mother is horrified and replies "We don't my son to be seen talking to the police there! His life is in danger right now!"







Me, finding the source of smoke in the woods. A campfire, with a homeless guy cooking a pot of food on it. A couple of firefighters are with me. "We don't give a shit if he has a fire out here" they said. Because it was still winter and there was no threat of fire spreading. "Well I give a shit, it's illegal as hell!" I told them, so at my direction they extinguished the fire while the guy still had his pot of beans over it. (hm…it sounds bad now that I re-read this but that guy DID deserve it, he was a real troublemaking kind of guy.. constantly getting arrested – trust me on this one.)





I pulled over a little blue a car for speeding, not because it had huge TRUMP lettering on the sides. As I was talking to the driver about her speeding, I saw she had a baseball bat in the passenger seat. I didn't ask but I knew it was because the TRUMP lettering, in bright white san serif font, was about 18" high and 7 feet long and it was, well, pretty obnoxious. I also saw more than a very few deep scratches along the sides of the car; the driver had added some extra lettering and arrows pointing to the damage that read "liberals who hate Trump". I wanted to tell the driver that if she felt like she needed to carry a baseball bat around because of the billboards on the sides of her car, then she was just making her life way harder than it needed to be. But like I said, I had pulled her over for speeding and I felt it would have been inappropriate to start talking politics.



Local big business owner called the police to report a scammer had hacked his company's email system. Scammer sent an email to the CFO, pretending to the be the CEO. Email directed a payment of $38,000 to an out of state vendor for BS "services rendered." CFO fell for it and sent away 38k. Then, much too late of course, asked the boss if that that was for reals.



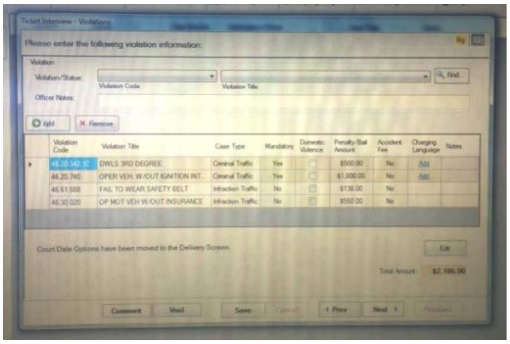


The man who was building a koi pond in his backyard with an excavator. His long-feuding neighbor chose that day to make a new fence between them; literally trapping the excavator behind the other guy's house. Of course he did that on purpose.



Sunday night. Raining. Winter. Dark. Cold. Nothing going on. A citizen called 911 for help; she's got spyware and she's having mental problems. The other officer on duty who answered up to the dispatch reaches for his phone to give her a call. "No, no, we gotta go meet her in person!" I said. The other officer demurred. "I was just going to give her a phone call, she's just got a spyware problem." "Yeah, but the dispatcher notes say she's got spyware in her car, which is a special kind of crazy," I said. "C'mon, there's nothing else going on; this might be the highlight of our shift tonight," I begged. "Okay," he relented. "Let's go meet her." We drive to her house, knock on the door, she lets us in. She's 30 years old, appears very well put-together; nice clothes, cute hair, make up is a bit much but she looks good, she's even got nicely manicured nails. I note all this because I had recognized her name and the other officer looked her up in the database, which revealed 16 different jail booking photos from her not-too-distant past of whoring and drug abuse. 16 pictures of her looking at her ragged and haggard worst. Anyway, on that Sunday night she looked like she had straightened her life out remarkably well, but as I suspected, one can only do so much recreational drug use before something in the brain gets permanently broken. She told us that she was hearing voices, coming from outside her house, and inside, and there might be hidden cameras watching her. We spend a long time calming her down but there is only so much that we can do. Eventually she feels okay and we leave. We get back to our cars and the other officer stops in the dark. "Hey, you know what would be really funny?" I can see he's grinning. I know he's thinking about going back and maybe talking crazy outside her door to really mess with her. "Yeah I know what would be funny and we're not going to do it." I replied. But he's got an even better idea, one that of course we absolutely cannot do. "We could go back there and pretend like it's our first time seeing her tonight." Now I start grinning. "She'd of course ask why we came back," he continues. "And we just play it straight like "what are you taking about this is the first time we've seen you tonight. How can we help you ma'am?" No way was that even a casual consideration for us but on the list of Ways to Mess with Crazy People, that one is definitely on there. The general idea still cracks me up. Do I have to say a hail rosemary now?







We catch a guy doing something criminal, I can't remember what exactly and there's a short discussion between myself and the other officer on duty as to who has to drive him to the jail. I decided to amuse my coworker by suggesting a Rock/Paper/Scissors method, which he agreed to. I then said 'I choose rock!" which rewarded me with seeing his confused face. "Uh, then I choose paper," he replied and I said "Ah dangit I lost again!" and I think he may have seriously thought for a moment that I had no idea how to play the game. Yeah, stupid fun. Anyway, I took the guy to the jail. As we walk into the intake booking area I asked him "Have you been here before?" Client: "Yeah, two or three times." Me: "Okay." Client, very defensively: "I'm not a criminal!"





Municipal traffic court is in session. One of the defendants, present for a charge of operating a motor vehicle with a suspended drivers license, gets sentenced by the judge to go to jail for a few days. The defendant, a black gentleman, gets rather upset and bitterly complains to me about it, because I'm the one who takes him to jail. "Of all those other guys facing the judge today, I'm the only one going to jail. You know why that is, officer? It's because I'm black! I feel picked on!" I tried to explain to him that race played no part in his case, and did he notice the prosecutor herself just happened to be African-American?





Me, standing in a woman's living room of her house which was built in the late 1970's and never updated in any way at all over the next 40 years. I'm talking dark wood doors and wall trim, cheap ass ugly brass-colored light fixtures, aluminum framed windows, Formica countertops, filthy carpet, dirty cobwebs in the corners of the walls and popcorn textured ceilings, etc. She's mad cause her husband died 5 years earlier and her sons, now in their mid-20's are complete fat lazy dope-smoking unemployed slacker bums and they still live at home, and they've decided to push back against her by incorporating very foul language into their arguments. She wants one of them out, so she called for the police to remove him. Sigh..that's me and another officer. Not our first time out there. Okay. The older son, maybe 27 or so, is walking back and forth in front of us out in the driveway, quite agitated. "What the fuck are you looking at?" he taunted at us. "Look at you, with your dumb faces." I didn't know if I felt like laughing at him or punching him. Then he yelled at his mother. "I said give me your fucking car keys so I can go!"





Somebody's porch is on fire. A bunch of debris is scattered; looks like it could be maybe from a discarded cigarette. Fire department responds. First units set up hoses. New fire engine is a little complicated for the guys running it; they were having some problems getting the pumps going and the hoses charged. During the 90 second delay, the small fire grew freakishly fast into a roaring inferno, while I watched. It was equal parts amazing and horrifying. The firefighters were also shocked. The lesson there is that one should not presume that a fire can't or won't go out of control in mere seconds. So the next time I see a little fire like that, I'll do anything I can to at least slow it down until the professionals get their hoses going on it for sure.





Cranky old man, known in his neighborhood as the "get off my lawn" guy, loses his shit one day when the new neighbor behind him, a medical doctor/naval officer, starts putting up a new fence to replace the old one. Naval Captain sets several posts in freshly mixed concrete, goes into his house for little break, and the cranky old man ran out, pulled the posts out of the concrete, and threw them on the ground. Of course there's no way to re-set those posts into the concrete once they get removed, so those holes were ruined. For better or for worse, the cranky old guy admitted to me a short time later that the new fence was actually legally on the line and he had been in the wrong when he ruined it. The naval officer was a little put out – nothing really says "welcome to the neighborhood" like having your new fence destroyed before you can even finish it.





Boss man at some business wonders why one of employees is late for work. Calls the guy, no answer. Sends one of his employees to the guy's house to check on him, knowing that he'd been having some serious recent health problems. Coworker goes to the guys house, no answer at the door. Front door is unlocked so coworker goes in and sees the guy in bed. Real still like. Coworker decides the guy is sleeping, so he leaves and reports back to work. A few hours later the boss, still missing his guy, goes to the house himself to look. Determines the guy is not sleeping, he's dead in bed. So the question is…did the coworker really think the guy was asleep, or did he suspect he was dead and didn't want to deal with it? Did denial kick in instantly? I'm not judging, I just think it was a little funny is all.





I remember the old grandma who called 911 after her husband of 50 years had died peacefully on his deathbed. I was the responding officer and she explained all of his recent health problems, which were the usual ones for an old sick person: chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, diabetes, pneumonia, heart disease, and in his unique case, more than forty years of some kind of muscular dystrophy. "He hadn't been eating for the past several days so I knew the end was near," grandma told me. "A hospice caregiver had stopped by in the middle of the night to check on him and I was told he was very close to death." I looked at grandpa laying in his giant hospital bed that hospice had brought in for him a week ago. His skin was a yellow pale from the now-complete cessation of blood and oxygen circulation and his nose hair was distractingly long. Dried spittle was crusted on his lips and his teeth were in horrible condition, because like most folks who start dying, the whole tooth brushing regimen pretty much goes away. "He woke up at about 4 am moaning, in a great deal of pain so I gave him a dose of morphine in his IV line." I looked up at grandma and asked "Did that work?" She was pretty calm considering the circumstances but like most old folks who had just met their dead spouse, she was still in a bit of shock. "No, it didn't seem to help so I gave him some more." I looked back at dead grandpa, still distracted by the long nose hairs bristling out of his nostrils. "What happened then?" I asked. "Well shortly after that he just stopped breathing and he died," she said. I thought about that for a bit and looked at her. And I began to wonder just how much morphine did she push into his IV line. Because "too much" morphine can definitely kill a man. Especially one on the brink of death anyway. And I began to wonder if she gave him too much unintentionally. Or maybe on purpose. And I quickly decided that if she did, who was I to make a big deal about it? The old guy was already being stalked by Mr. Death and if grandma was ready to open to the door wider for the grim reaper by hastening the inevitable with what turned out to be a painless death, I wasn't going to judge her for that. In fact, if that was indeed what happened, I was okay with it. I offered some condolences, noted what I needed to, noted his long list of medical conditions for my report, and called the coroner's office. The coroner agreed it was a natural death (I didn't mention the morphine part) and so it would not require an autopsy. The coroner said he'd sign a death certificate at his office and call for the funeral home to come pick up the body.







Bailiff duty for municipal court. One of the defendants arrives for his criminal charge of operating a motor vehicle with a suspended license. Not his first time. I notice he arrives alone, and has car keys with him which is odd because he's not supposed to be driving. The public defender and the judge go over his case very quickly and make a date for a future court appearance; the guy then leaves so fast I didn't have time to check his current drivers license status. I discreetly follow him outside and watch him drive off in his car, that he had parked in the parking garage literally right under the courtroom. Yep, his license was still suspended. I documented it all in a report for another new charge against him. Pro Tip: If you don't have a license, and you have to drive yourself to court for that, maybe don't park your car so close where the cops are going to see you. Maybe like, I dunno, park a few blocks away at least? I couldn't resist going back into the courtroom and telling the public defender what I had just seen his idiot client do.



I arrested a guy once for throwing a log through a window. From the outside, into the living room.



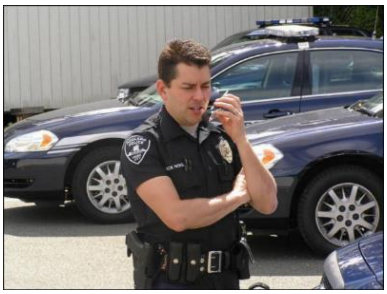


The young addict who overdosed and died from inhaling tetrafluoroethene from gas duster air cans. You know, the kind you use for blasting your keyboard clean. He was stealing several large cans a day from WalMart and had a very impressive and sad collection of empties scattered around him in the woods. Completely melted his brain and liver into goo and stopped his heart.





The lady who flipped off the guy in a parking lot. I think he took her parking spot or something. His shocking over-reaction was to stomp over to her car, yank open her car door and holler “If you’re going to act like a man, then get out and fight me like one!” She was instantly traumatized. Definitely the last time she ever flipped anybody the bird.





Brewpub owner reports a theft of the safe from his office. Good news is that there was a nice surveillance camera system set up. Bad news was the DVR was also stolen. Because it was on the desk.. literally.. right next to the safe.

I caught a gal speeding. Her excuse: “I have to get this cheeseburger home to my boyfriend before it gets cold!”







I pulled over a lady for using her cell phone while driving. I walk up the car. Unlike just about every other driver I ever pulled over for that, she’s still got the phone up to her ear when I get outside her car. She glances at me and holds up a finger, and says curtly “I’m on hold,” and then she goes back to listening to her phone. I decided to remain calm and see what happens next, because clearly this must have been a Very Important Call. So I silently counted, and at about the 40-second mark of me patiently waiting, she finally finished her business on the phone and turned her attention to me.





Guy in a pickup truck liked driving around with bright red LED lights under his headlights. Totally illegal; cars can’t have red lights in the front. The first two times I caught him I just verbally warned him and tried to educate him on the federal DOT regulations concerning vehicle lighting. The third time I wrote him a ticket. Every time he complained bitterly that other people were getting away with the same thing, so why was I picking on him? The third time I caught him he was just about apoplectic and convinced I was stalking him. He took his ticket to court to complain to the judge. The judge reduced the penalty, clearly not caring that I already given the guy a break twice, with two prior warnings.





I was at the post office on personal business, off duty and out of uniform. The postal clerk across the counter quietly thanked me for being professional a month earlier when the Postmaster called 911 to have him escorted off the property because he was starting to go postal, and I was the officer who showed up. Slightly awkward for me, uh, me both times.











A superior court judge who lived in town came to our front counter once and discreetly handed me a purple cloth Crown Royal bag full of (then quite illegal) marijuana that he wanted me to discreetly get rid of for him. He didn't say where he got it but I knew it was from his teenage son. Okay, Judge. Sigh..I don't know why people involve the police like that. Judge! Just throw that shit away yourself and leave me out of it, or I'm going to have to mention this 25 years later right here!




The old woman who died in the bathtub, getting the water ready for a bath. (actually not an uncommon way to die - when you get old, beware the bending over the tub move – it can kill you I actually have seen it more than once) Very senile grandpa was sitting in his old recliner in the living room; with a brain memory on a permanent 60 second erase/reset/loop cycle. Meaning anything past 60 seconds was pretty much gone from his brain. He had noticed she was freshly dead but kept forgetting. Me and several other officers got tired of repeating ourselves to the old guy so we decided we could just ignore him, yes it was rude and disrespectful but he wasn't going to remember any of it anyway. By the way, the whole house was Frozen in Time: 1978 Edition! Glitter popcorn ceilings, dark wood trim everywhere, brass light fixtures, beige light switch and outlet covers, hideous green carpet; the works. So there's me, looking in the kitchen for prescription pill bottles to see how bad off grandma had been for the old bending over the tub move to finish her off and I find in a kitchen cabinet some old spices and herbs, in little bottles. Decades old. Literally. Decades old. And there, front and center: an old, sealed box of Jello, dated almost 50 years old. Never used. Somehow survived 50 years of spring cleanings and holidays and birthday parties..never touched. But still front and center, surrounded by other ancient unused seasonings. My mind: blown. The other officers present: also minds blown. I did take a picture of it, but sadly lost it years ago.




Over the course of my career, more than a few of my police investigations and reports were used not only for criminal prosecutions, but subsequent civil court cases. Some of them ended with plaintiffs being awarded multi-million dollar settlements for compensation of being wronged by individuals, businesses, and corporations. Usually I knew when I was writing the report if it was going to be a Big Deal or not; when I knew for sure, I'd make damn sure my finished product was as good as I could get it.





The young men sitting across the table from me were sharply dressed. They wanted to be police officers, and one by one they were being interviewed by a panel of citizens and officers, including me. Since this was a civil service testing process, our instructions were exact and stern that the applicants would all be asked the exact same specific questions, with no deviations. It was a kind of unsatisfactory process; I couldn't prompt or correct the applicants, or ask them any follow up questions at all. One poor guy went off a tangent and started rambling, several minutes later at the end of his time we smiled and said "Thank you," and gave him a low score on that one for failing to answer the exact question.




When an especially serious event occurred, the 911 dispatcher would warn everybody first with a special tone of three beeps, not unlike a truck backing up. That was reserved for bank robberies or bank alarms, or a bad guy brandishing a gun somewhere. Most of the time the tones were for another police agency, but every single cop listening to that police channel got an adrenaline rush, preceded with a general feeling of immediate dread when the tones came out. When the event was not in our jurisdiction, we could breathe a sigh of relief, otherwise if it was indeed for us, it would be time to jump and go hit the lights and sirens. To a man, every cop I ever met (myself included) did not like hearing those emergency tones and it was pretty much impossible to not get a heart palpitation every single time we heard it.





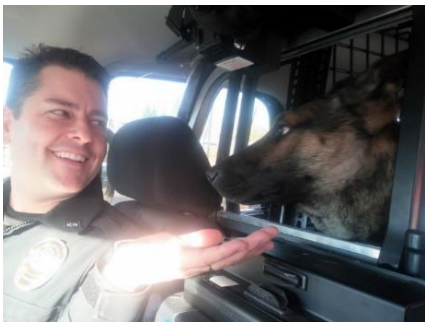


Neighbor dispute. I get called. "What's going on here?" I asked. Home owner pointed to the fence separating him from his neighbor. "His dog barks a lot, and I can't stand it anymore, so every time the dog barks, I let off a burst from my air horn here!"





I was in my driveway, on a day off, making a cage/partition for my K9 partner so he could ride in the back seat. Step one: unbolt and remove the 2/3 split back bench seat. Leave the right hand side 1/3 seat in place; that will be prisoner seating. Step two: test fit the custom made (by me) vertical partition to separate the K9 from the prisoner seating. How much room should there be between the seat and the new wall? I wondered. Best way to tell, sit in there and see how much space is available. And then, like an idiot, I closed the door to really see how much room there was. Forgetting the part about how the back doors to police cars do not have door handles on the insides. It actually took me about 10 seconds to remember that, I was so engrossed with moving the partition around to see where it would finally be mounted. And then I realized I was in a situation. Let's all pause for a moment to appreciate what I had just done. I'll add here that I was home alone. And my phone was of course in the house. But then I realized that I would be able to squeeze through the sliding window between the rear seat and the front seat! Yay! Problem solved! And within a minute, I was back to work, and successfully finished the k9 cargo compartment. Whew, that was close.





Hit and run. In a, uh, a car wash. Customer #2, in real nice Cadillac sedan, got rear-ended by a crappy old Ford explorer when Customer #1 in front of him put his Ford into reverse. Twice. In the middle of the the car wash. Smashing the grill of the Caddy. Yes, while all the brushes were spinning and the soap was spraying. Ford driver fled the scene after exiting. Too bad for him the car wash had a really nice Hi-Def camera system in there. When I found the Ford driver he insisted it was the car wash rollers that had made his Ford go backwards into the Cadillac. But the surveillance cameras very clearly showed his reverse lights going on both times when he hit the Cadillac twice. Hey people! Leave the gear shifter alone when you're in a car wash!





The defendant in the courtroom was doing his best to debate the judge. He was with a constitutional militia organization, and had decided he would not be beholden to silly laws, like the ones about drivers licenses required to operate motor vehicles on state owned roadways. He was in court contesting the nice police officer's authority to issue him tickets. The judge, having gone to a few rodeos before this clown showed up, patiently shot down all of the man's standard objections. Finally in desperation the man pointed to the American flag in the court room. "Your honor, that flag has gold fringe on it. That means it is conferring admiralty/maritime jurisdiction, which this court is not, therefore, this court is not valid to hear my case." The whole thing was kind of entertaining to watch. None of it worked for him; turns out the judge did indeed have all kinds of authority and jurisdiction to hear the case and impose penalties. Fortunately I didn't have to deal with too many of those morons. (Those kinds of defendants, I mean – not the judges)







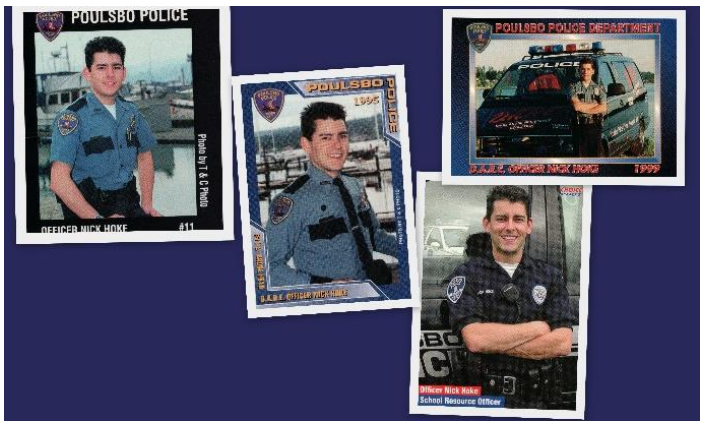




July 4th festival; a million people are in town, walking around downtown. A couple of dudes who stole beer from a store get away in a car but they are headed my way and I catch them, right next to the old police station. Myself and another officer arrest them and recover the beer. After the guys are cuffed and stuffed into my car, I realize one of them is missing his ballcap. I remember I had set it on the back trunk of my car for a moment while I was frisking him, and I remember a lot of folks were walking back and forth during this event. Conclusion: somebody walking by, feeling quite brave, saw the hat unguarded, and swiped it off the trunk of my patrol car. Probably on a dare or a bet. I was more impressed than mad. It wasn't my hat, so I didn't care that much. And the guy who got arrested for stealing beer had bigger problems then about his hat being stolen. "Looks like your hat got stolen," I told the beer thief. "It's sucks when people steal your things, huh?"




The old police station we were in for 20 years was in an old doctor's office; before that it had been a dentist office, built before I was born. The exam rooms were converted to sergeant's offices, and the bathrooms still had small pass-through doors in the walls where urine samples could be placed for the nurses in the next room. The building was close to 50 years old when we moved in, and 20 years later when we moved out it had been remodeled several more times it still didn't exactly fit our needs. But it did have a great view, overlooking Liberty Bay and the Port of Poulsbo. A visiting police chief from some other agency told us that our view was probably 2nd best in the state. First place went to the Medina police station, on the shores of Lake Washington. Home to a small and very affluent community of millionaires and billionaires, (Bill Gates and Jeff Bezos, for two examples) the area between the PD and the lake was determined by the locals to be a very safe place for ladies to set up towels and lay on the beach to get their summer tans. The police officers certainly didn't mind, and kept an eye on them to make sure they stayed safe. So…win/win I guess.

Quiet Sunday morning; a mini mart store clerk called 911 to report a theft. He was pretty worked up. I responded to the gas station and the agitated clerk told me that a hispanic suspect had purchased some items, but then also.. stole an ice cream bar! And then had the audacity to litter the wrapper in the parking lot! I asked the clerk how much the ice cream bar cost. "One dollar fifty nine cents," he told me. Well good job taking your job seriously, sir! I was tempted to pay for it myself so I wouldn't have to investigate it, which I didn't anyway. Because.. $1.59.







I came across a hilariously cute construction site scene: a new neighborhood was being built and the construction workers got adopted by the large friendly dog that lived nearby. The dog would not stay out of their construction area so they bought it a little orange safety vest and every morning they put the vest on him, and then he'd just hang out with them all day. It was pretty cute.





It's two hours past midnight, I'm out on patrol and I come across a weirdness that my brain cannot process. It took me a good 10 or 15 long seconds to figure out that what I was seeing was a residential fence that had been run into and over by a drunk driver passing through. The fence was black vinyl coated chain link, only 3 feet high. About 75 feet of it had been ripped off the posts from the homeowner's yard, and dragged into the middle of a residential street, along with some of the posts. Two blocks away; the drunk driver and his broken car. Again, it just took me the stupidist longest time to figure out the twisted mass in the roadway was a destroyed fence; my mind could just not compute it right away.







Pro tip: if you try to shoplift liquor from a store, and you stuff the bottle into your pants when the police catch you, it's not going to work if you have sweatpants on. For you ladies, hiding things in your bra might work, but if a female officer is present it's probably going to be found.

Tom, the balding local transvestite (if it's still okay to use that word?) had a flat tire on his/her van, and it was disabled in traffic. I stopped to help her, "her" because he was his alter ego identity of "Sheila" that day complete with a tight sweater highlighting his large bossom, and a large blond wig, and lipliner which would put the Cure's Robert Smith to shame. My helping him/her looked like me holding the hose from his bicycle tire pump onto the tire valve, while he pumped air into it, while in the traffic lane. Do you know how long it takes to pump air into a deflated van tire with a bicycle pump? And the hose was only a foot and half long, so I was in very close proximity to his/her size 12 woman's shoe, (high heel of course) and he/she was breathing pretty heavily almost into my ear, pumping the handle. And I have to note that because Tom/Sheila, being an avant-guard cross dresser back in the days when it was quite eyebrow raising, looked almost exactly like 1980's Dee Snyder from Twisted Sister, complete with the oversize wig and eye makeup and very tight sweater highlighting giant gravity-deying breasts. Now I don't care what people look like, God bless em all, but I sure did feel uncomfortable with that whole scene. When the tire was maybe halfway inflated I announced it was good to go and I then left. Too bad nobody took a photo of that scene; I'd glady share it here!







The woman sitting in the car with the smashed windshield who thought her boyfriend's punching it in with his fist was "just normal." When I handed her a DV help brochure, she started crying, shocked. "I'm a domestic violence victim?!?"





I met a lot of different tow truck drivers over the years; several dozen, easily. We called them regularly to removed crashed cars from the roads. Side note: as a general rule, the police didn't ask dispatch for specific tow truck companies to respond; we just took whichever one was next on the rotational list. So years and years ago, the owner of the biggest tow truck company in the county split his business into several different tow truck companies; different names, different truck colors, and different impound yards...but all still the same owner. So all the money went back into him in the end. Anyway, I knew this one tow truck driver who was pretty friendly; he even got over the fact that I refused to shake his hand whenever I saw him, since he was absolutely filthy every time I saw him. He did his job without gloves, and it showed. He looked like he maybe stepped into a shower once, maybe twice a month. Oh who am I kidding, it was one per month. Anyway, he was super friendly so I gave him one of our department challenge coins, not the metal ones but the full color porcelain ones. He liked it so much he carried it with him in his pocket. Every. Single. Day. About a year later when he showed it to me, it was almost completely covered with dirt and grime and all the white on it had turned to brown, so I took it from him and gave him a brand new one again, which made him just as happy as the first one I gave him.





When we moved out of the old PD station and into the newly-built city hall building nearby, we discovered a pleasant geographic bonus in our favor; we were close (less than 500 feet away) from the world famous bakery in the middle of Front Street. On some early mornings the air around there would be saturated and infused with the smell of warm freshly baking pastries. And I mean saturated. The bakery made all the usually expected things one would find in a bakery; breads and rolls and muffins and all kinds of flour-based and sugar-coated treats and sweets and cookies and lots of donuts including their special "Viking Donut" which were super-sized basic glazed donuts that would take almost two hands to hold to hold it up to one's pie hole. The bakery also made a fair amount of Scandinavian treats like Lefse and Krumkake and other things I didn't care about as much a Viking Donut or two. (Just kidding. Nobody could eat two of those things.) The PD was close enough that sometimes the police parking garage will fill up with bakery smells. And sometimes the restaurants on Front Street would contribute to the flavors later in the evening; the smells of good fish and chips might waft over and through, or smells from the Italian restaurant in the evenings, or in the mornings sometimes the distinct smell of fresh buttered pancakes, complete with syrup. No, I don't know how they did that but it was not my imagination. But the bakery…let's stop and savor this moment to really appreciate this because I don't have a scratch and sniff sticker here; you'll need to use your imagination. Ready? The air. Sometimes. Was heavy. With the sweet surgery aroma of. Cinnamon twists and blueberry donuts and Danishes. And Bear Claws. And cookies. Or freshly being-baked Cinnamon Raisin Bread. All being produced by a certified world-class master baker. Now this wasn't every morning; the weather conditions had to be just right for the aromas to fill up our parking garage. When it happened though, one could gain weight just by eating the delicious air. Not surprisingly, having an established bakery like that a half block from the police station made it pretty convenient for appreciative citizens to bring us treats; I'd say we'd got a box or two of bakery donuts dropped off for us at the rate of once a month, easily. More during the holidays.







Drug addicts. I met more than many, in their cars in parking lots all over town. Nodding off and in zombie mode, alarming other citizens. One guy I caught had been, of all places, passed out at the vaccuum cleaner station at a car wash. Myself and another officer roused him, questioned him, and arrested and searched him. The whole time we were out there we had to deal with several completely oblivious car wash patrons who drove up next to us and turned on the vacuum cleaner machines to loudly suck the dirt out of their cars. It was like just about the worst place in the whole city to try and investigate a crime by asking questions and listening for anwers, with vacuum sucking machines roaring full blast on either side of us.



Adult intramural soccer game is in progress on a Sunday, out on a school field. One of the players got a little too serious about the game and decided to start punching one of the players, resulting in a 911 call. His teammates did not want to testify against him, making my investigation longer and more complicated than it should have been. Extra frustrating was that one of those "didn't see nuthin" witnesses was a local newspaper reporter who was not fooling me in the slightest; I knew godamn well he had seen what happened. But he refused to provide me any helpful information.





A helpful citizen called 911 to report the public library was on fire in the middle of the night. My concern level was pretty low because the library staff had got in the habit of leaving decorative gas fireplace "on" 24/7, and from just the right angle at night, yep, flames were visible from the outside looking in. I go the library and yep, it's just the fireplace again, for about the 19th time.




Probably that same helpful citizen was the same one who called 911 everytime the guy living on his boat out in the bay fired up his deck bbq grill; a thin column of smoke rising from his boat was enough to convince somebody it was definitely on fire. Every single time we'd get our binoculars and confirm he was just cooking on the grill, and there was no need to send out the fire boat.





Chief of Police (#6 for me) parked his Jeep in our secure police garage on a Saturday and walked downtown with his daughter to a coffeeshop. On my way out on patrol, I saw he had left his jeep unlocked, and the top was down. I ran back into the office, gathered up a handful of punched-out paper holes, and carefully set them on the top of windshield sun visor. Later, when he drove out and got up some speed, the open top of the jeep caused the paper dots to start blowing into his face. He admitted to me that when that happened, he stupidly reached up and pulled down the visor, which of course spilled the rest onto his lap. I of course told him that I didn't know what he was talking about.

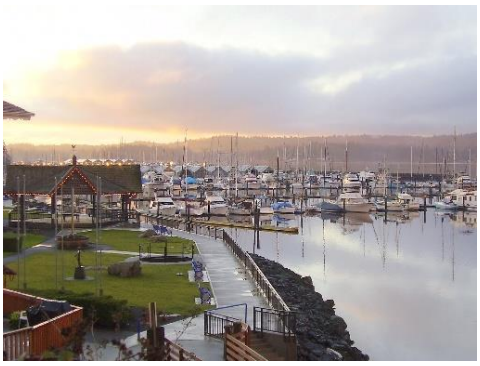




I pulled over a driver for some moving violation, and as I walked up the car the driver said to me "May I help you?" Now, I know that sounds very polite and accomodating, but when the police pull you over for a reason, it's not because they need your help with something. Asking them if you can help this just sounds….weird. This is noteworthy because later in the day, about 6 traffic stops later, I pulled somebody else over and got the exact same inquiry: "May I help you, Officer?"

I pulled over a woman for speeding. Her excuse: “I just lost a thirty-six thousand dollar check and I’m freaking the fuck out!”





Likewise, I’ve lost track of how many times I had been off to the side of a road, writing notes or listening to a radio dispatch, and well-meaning citizens approached me and asked if I needed help? Well God bless you sir, no, I’m okay, and I succesfully reisisted the urge to snarkily point out that if I needed help, I had a police radio and police partners specifically for that, thank you ma’am.





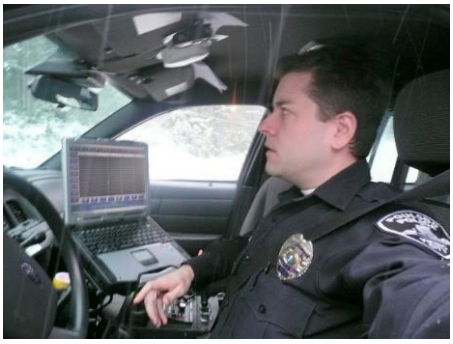


Car accident: a bad one. I arrive on the scene and I’m transfixed at the sight of the damaged steering wheel. The driver’s hands and arms and had been locked onto both sides of the wheel at the moment of impact and somehow, someway, the steering wheel got bent inward on both sides, kind of like a taco. I spent a long time staring at that thing; I had never imagined that a person’s arms and wrists and hands could transfer enough energy to a steering wheel with enough force to bend it inwards. The only pictures I took were on my work camera so I regrettably can’t share the shocking visual with you all here.




Car accidents with windshields cracked from unrestrained occupants’ heads? Yep, I’ve seen more than a few of those. Some folks have to learn the hard way about seatbelts. And windshields.





“What seems to be the problem, officer?” is not the best way to start a conversation when you get pulled over. I heard it many times, and every time it kind of rankled me.

Some kind of boyfriend/girlfriend dispute at the Jack in the Box parking lot leads to a police call and response. I get there, mediate the dispute and restore calm. The young lady involved, as it turns out, was living out of her car. Which was parked in the parking lot. Because she was an employee at the Jack in the Box. Living in her car. That was, not coincidentally, the last time I ever ate at the Jack in the Box. Because how clean can a food handler be, really, living out of a car?





A retired cop from California was talking to me outside the city hall one day. He mentioned he had been in a confrontation of sorts with one of our local homeless dudes down at the public waterfront restroom; the homeless guy, for no good reason, threatened to pull out a knife on the retired cop. The retired cop was outside the restroom door at that point and told the dude to come on out and bring his knife to a gun fight, because the cop had a gun. (or at least that's what he said..) The homeless dude very wisely chose to not come out. The retired cop and I were laughing a bit at that; the cop had kept calling the homeless dude's bluff and was taunting him to come out and face him; but dude was having none of it. Maybe that will teach him to not talk shit about pulling knives out on people.





A woman came to the police department because some truck had scraped her car badly while she had been parked in a grocery store parking lot. I checked out the damage and it was pretty severe; it looked like a delivery truck's rear lift gate had gouged her car's side; several feet long. It was a head scratcher, because she had not seen it happen. Her husband then showed up and while we were staring at the damage she blurted out a story: "You know what else weird happened to me today? I was driving along and some guy came running up to me and said that I had hit his mailboxes! But I didn't! And he said he had my side miror that broke off! But that's crazy!" The husband and I stopped and stared at her. Then we looked at where her side mirror should be, but it was broken off. Missing. Gone. Then we got very close and studied the damage on her car. Hmm...yep the scrapes and gouges were at mailbox height. And there were some wood fibers imbedded into some of the scrapes, like they had come from a mailbox post...The husband's eyes got very big. Then the woman laughed and said "I didn't run into any mailboxes! If I did, I certainly would know it!!" and then she threw in another laugh. I didn't say anything; I was just staring, watching her denial set itself more firmly into her psyche. The husband, feeling and looking considerably awkward, put his arm around his wife and said "Uh..honey, let's leave the nice police officer alone and go figure this out.." which was fine with me, since the mailboxes that got broken had not been reported to me, so it was either not in my jurisdiction or the owner had not cared enough to call the police. As soon as I assured the husband they could leave if they wanted, he got her out of there pretty quickly. Like I said, that one was a head scratcher.

Me at the office, seeing one of the clerks is doing a background check fingerprint card for a teacher. “Sue! I didn’t know they were letting you fingerprint people again!” (Sue would invariably sigh at that moment, knowing what was coming) “Have they taught you now how to fingerprint people without breaking their fingers?”




At least a dozen times in my career, while driving a prisoner to the jail, they’d fall asleep in the back seat and slump down or slump over out of my sight. Every single time I’d start worrying that they were dying of a drug overdose; many times I’d have to yell at them or pull over and get out to check on them. Took me a long time to figure it out but eventually I started belting them in pretty tight with the seatbelts to keep them slipping down out of view. I’m glad to report the number of dead prisoners I brought to the jail was zero.







Every officer has certain pet peeve traffic infractions that they love catching people do because it tops their list of things that drive them crazy. The things that really drove me crazy? Of course I have a list! It starts with drivers who throw cigarette butts out of their cars. Actually can broken down into two categories; those who drop their cigarettes, maybe trying to be discreet, and then there are the assholes who flagrantly flick their butts out 10 feet away. God help those people if I see them do that. Actually I began to see a lot less of that as the years went by; when cigarettes started to get expensive people hung on to them a lot more and smoked them all the way to the end. Next up: drivers who make turns without using their turn signals. And drivers who blindly back out of driveways or side streets into traffic. Pedestrians who walk or jog on roadway shoulders when there is a perfectly good sidewalk two feet away. Drivers who turn off of main roads onto side roads or driveways and get about halfway through their turn and then slow way down or even stop with the ass end of their car still hanging out in traffic and when I’m behind them and they’re turning but then they stop and they’re in my way. I HATE that!





As long as I’m here complaining about drivers, let’s discuss People Who Freak when an emergency vehicles passes them; could be a police car, or a fighter truck or ambulance… and they pull over to the LEFT side of the road. No! Don’t do that, it’s NOT helpful! You pull over to the RIGHT side, okay? And motorists who decided to go to a sudden dead stop IN THE ROADWAY. Also no. And then there are the folks who pull over onto the right shoulder, but don’t bother to slow down in the slightest. Which is pretty damn inconvenient when I need to make a right turn but they’re pacing alongside me on the shoulder, ffs.

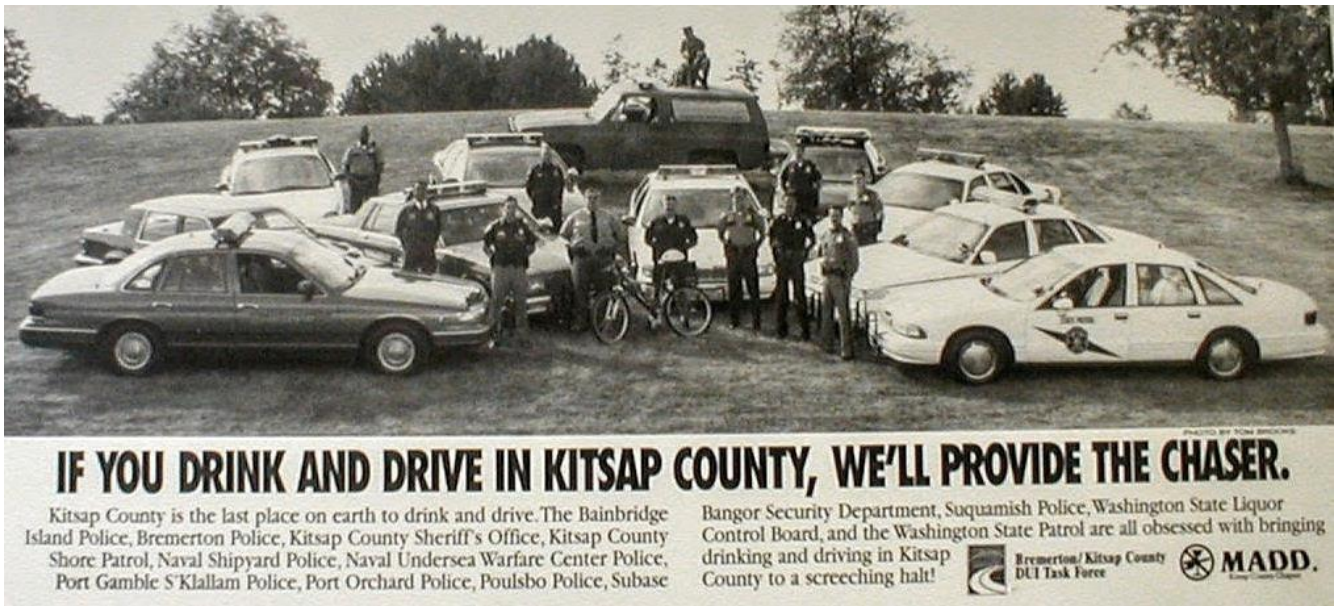
I'm at an emergency medical airlift landing zone; behind me is an aid car with a trauma patient who is being stabilized for a flight across Puget Sound to the Harborview Medical Center in Seattle. In front of me is an Airlift Northwest EC-135T-2, just landed. The guy walking across the field toward me has some kind of a significant physical deformity; he's dragging a sideways-turned foot. I have no idea what his problem is, but it looks like some kind of cerebral palsy gait disorder. Doesn't really appear to be a problem to him though; he's wearing a flight suit and he is in fact...the pilot of the helicopter. Which made me realize that I needed to recalibrate my brain a bit; if I had seen this guy shuffling around in a grocery store or anywhere else in public, I would have never, ever guessed that he was in fact a very capable, professional emergency helicopter pilot.







A couple guys with paramotors (paragliders?) (paraplanes?) found a nice wide open field near the college and used it as a pretty good runway and landing zone for their powered parachute contraptions. They had the larger versions that weren't strapped on their backs, their models had tricycle landing gear and a small seat. On warm summer days they'd go up once or twice a week and putter around about a 2,00 feet up. Invariably, some well meaning but ignorant citizen would call 911, reporting "..Somebody in a parachute looks like they're in trouble and trying to find a place to land!" Ignorant as in, they didn't notice the parachutes had engines. And propellors. And they were not in trouble and not losing altitude. So stop calling everytime already.



During early morning commute hours, pre-dawn, a tree has crashed down onto the main state route going through town. No cars are hit but one lane is completely blocked, requiring police cars and officers to alternate the traffic past the tree in the dark. A public works crew is dispatched and they arrive to start cutting up the tree. To give them room, the police stop all the traffic for about 10 minutes. On my end of the traffic, I go up the car at the head of line and suggest to the driver that if she wants to turn around and take a detour that would be okay. She agrees, and the next 20 cars behind her follow. At minute number 6 of the 10 minute closure a driver who does not want to detour around starts honking his horn for my attention. I'm a little busy removing branches from the roadway; when we get all done I walk up to him. He suggests the police open at least one lane of traffic. I have to explain to him that we were doing that, but then we closed it off to give the crew space to clear the tree. Driver insisted there was room for one lane. I further explain that to to that would require two officers – one at each end of the closure – to coordinate traffic flow and we decided it would be more efficient to help clear the tree off the road instead. Driver kept insisting there had been room for his lane to keep going through. I then had to point out to him that all this talking was not helping the process along at all and he could just be patient like everybody else, and the whole horn-honking thing was really not helpful at all. I'm pretty sure he didn't like my attitude. So that made us even, I guess.





Some of the things people have said to me when I pulled them over for bad driving:

"I'm actually late for court right now for a ticket."

"My driving record? Perfect! For the most part."

"I've only lived here a few months."

"How's my driving record? I don't usually get pulled over."

"Oh I was going to put my seat belt on when I get to the next red light."

"What seems to be the problem, officer?"

"Aside from a recent DUI, my driving record is pretty good."





"I don't need to use my turn signal when there's nobody behind me."

"You're a city cop, you don't have jurisidiction on county roads."

"This is bullshit."

"I'm not signing that ticket."

"I'm getting tired of these tickets."

"I'll see you in court."





I can't remember how this came out, but at one point a criminal had offered to me what he had heard about me on the street – my reputation as a police officer was "hard but fair." Hmm.....I guess I'll take that.



Driving on patrol, I come up to a stop sign controlled intersection to make a left turn. Across from me, another driver is already stopped, waiting to continue straight across. The driver motions me to go ahead first. I decline, because they got there before I did, they're going straight, and I'm making a left across in front of them. So it's their turn to go, not mine. The driver motions again, being friendly. But I still don't go, because I'm following the rules of the road and I'm not going to turn in front of them out of turn, even though I'm in a patrol car. They motion again for me to go first. I still decline because I'm in no rush and I can wait. Finally the other driver decides to just go. How often did that happen to me? Just about every single day I was on patrol.





A woman driving her car but paying more attention to the phone in hands than the stopped cars in front of her ran into a stopped Jeep in front of her and the impact destroyed her Honda. The Jeep was okay. She had a warrant for her arrest, because a judge had called her name out in court for a prior offense and she had not been there. So her crashed car got towed away and she went off to jail in handcuffs. The driver of the Jeep was pretty wide-eyed at how that turned out.



At the Jack in the Box: the manager called one day because somebody had locked themselves in the public bathoom there and was not responding to any knocking on the door. They had been there a couple of hours, at least. I called for the fire department, and when they arrived we all agreed it must be somebody zonked out or dead in there with a heroin syringe stuck in their arm. The firefighters brought out one of their big axes and they pried the door open. Inside was...nothing. Nothing at all. That was the day that the manager realized that somebody could (and did) lock the door from the inside, close the door, and it will lock shut with no way for anybody to unlock it from the outside. That was a design flaw, for sure.






A down-on-his-luck sailor spent too much money on a decrepit old 58 foot trawler. With a huge old wooden hull, it looked like it would need somewhere between 5 and 10 thousand dollars in repairs and maintenance every 12 months just to keep it from getting worse, which was way more than the old sailor had. The boat had gotten blown ashore during a storm and got beached. I suggested to the owner that perhaps God didn't want him to own a boat? "It's not God that I'm fighting with, it's Satan!" he told me. I pointed out that it appeared that the rising tide and the wind were clearly responsible for grounding his old boat. "No, that's Satan's agents that did that to me!" was his response. Uh.....okaaaaaayyyyy. Good luck with your boating adventures.




The PPD patrol officers had a special little quick-reference booklet that listed most of the traffic laws; it got updated by our municipal court annually and it contained literally hundreds of traffic and criminal offenses. When I had citizens riding with me I'd show them the book to watch their reactions when they saw just how many laws there were that could be broken. There were also some pretty obscure ones in there, like "driving over a fire hose" and "advertising unlawful speed attained" and "snowmobile DUI" and "theft of cable tv services" and "depositing of unwholesome substance" and "spectator at animal fight" and "driving while embracing" which is what it's called when two adults in the front seat decide to..you know...uh...





Motor vehicle collision on the highway: three cars had crashed into each other, making a mess of the road. I arrive with the aid crews and some dude runs up to me waving his arms, yelling to me that I just "drove through the debris field" which in his opinion was a cardinal sin. I found out later he had been a paramedic in some other jurisdiction, but got fired. Mostly likely because he was an ass. I say that because he then told me where to move my patrol vehicle to; he didn't like where I had parked it. I pointed out to him that HIS parking job was the main problem; stopped on the wrong side of the road by the crashed cars it was causing a significant amount of confusion and complicating the whole mess. After a brief yelling match I won and I made him leave. Although he yelled back over his shoulder that I was doing everything wrong and people should listen to him more.

A young and underpaid home health care worker aide called 911 to report finding their morning client, an old person, was dead on the living room floor. The care worker was pretty shaken; it was his first dead client he'd had. That was the same day that I learned that sometimes, freshly dead people smell just as bad as day-old dead people.





The time I went to the kidney dialysis center because one of the patients hooked up to the machines for dialysis had suddenly died. All of the other patients there also hooked up to the machines – they were all in one room pretty much in a circle in clinic recliners - had no choice but to stay there and watch him die and get not successfully resuscitated by the paramedics and then get covered with a blanket.







Below: here's one my clients who thought he could outrun me down onto the beach. He was right. But I did catch him later when he thought the coast was clear to come out of the woods. That's when the Long Arm of the Law got him. Boy it took me a long time to clean my car after this; that was all tidal mudflat grime.



Woman in an apartment calls 911 to complain about a low flying plane. The plane is a small 2-seater, and the pilot is just flying over the bay, doing some dives and turns and probably having a great time but this woman is absolutely convinced that he is diving directly toward her apartment building repeatedly and he is going to for sure crash into it and kill her. She wanted me to call the FAA and do something about it. The plane never got below about 800 feet so I wasn't really seeing the problem.

Guy goes into Home Depot empty handed. Takes a couple items off the shelves and goes straight to the return counter and returns them without a receipt. Because he didn't buy them. Home Depot helpfully gave him a refund for $400, on a gift card. Which the guy then resold to a pawn shop. The pawn shop was required to log all bought and sold items into a database that the police had access to. I was stunned to see all the entries they had from that guy; dozens of Home Depot gift cards. "At what point do the pawn shop employees start to question the legitimacy of this guy and his never ending supply of gift cards!?!?" I aksed our department detective. The detective pointed out "The pawn shop guys don't ever ask questions – they just take whatever they can, to sell for a profit." Yeah, turns out they were actually totally in on it; it was a big crime ring thing.





I'm on patrol in my car, stopped in traffic. I see the car in front of me has a radar detector front and center on the dashboard, and it's on, with a little green light. I reach over and power up my radar system and turn on the transmitter. I'm instantly rewarded by seeing the guy's detector light up like a little Christmas tree with all kinds of red lights, and the driver suddenly looks up and all around, but not behind him. I turn off my radar and the little red lights go off. A moment later, I hit it again and his detector activates again, probably with audible warnings too. He looks around again, but still neglects to check his rearview mirror. I turn my antenna off, wait a few seconds..then turn it on again. Driver finally reached over and unplugged his detector in frustration. How many times did I do something like over the years? Yeah...a lot.





Strange man existing on a solid diet of prescription pills is causing problems again and I'm in his apartment; his room mate has died under rather suspicious circumstances, so a detective is called in to investigate. While I was there I was kind of distracted with they guys' unique DIY car litterbox set-up: it was a large cardboard box about 2 feet tall. He had poured cat litter into it, and as the cat fouled it up the guy simply added more litter on top. When I was there, the box was almost competely full, because the guy never bothered to empty it. It probably weighed about 80 pounds at that point.





Public Safety Announcement: If you're doing your laundry in a public laundromat and you're really drunk, be careful to not put your clothes into a washing machine already loaded with somebody else's clothes. Also, if you're not drunk, but still doing your laundry in the public laundromat, if you leave for an hour or so, somebody who is drunk may put their clothes into your washing machine. Then the drunk person may go outside and pass out and her boyfriend will transfer the cleaned clothes from the washer to the dryer and get all defensive when you notice he's folding his and your clothes from the dryer, and then the police get called and Officer Hoke arrives and sighs and has to suggest to everybody that they sort out their clothes out like adults.

A house caught on fire, as they sometimes do, and half of it burned up. The jeep in the garage had also caught on fire and was completely destroyed. The fire department guys had surrounded the house with hoses and water and drowned it and put out the fire. The poor Jeep hulk, first having its protective layer of paint burnt off, then got doused with water. The result was that by the next morning it was completely rust colored; because bare steel that gets wet will oxidize surprisingly quickly.







Grandpa turned his back on 71 year old grandma in the WalMart and she escaped from the store, because her Alzheimer's was kicking in and she was losing her mind. Once out in the parking lot she forgot pretty much everything, so she decided to pick a direction and start walking. Which turned out to be her speciality; when she was found 2 hours later by one of the almost-dozen police officers dispatched to find her, she was over 8 miles away (!) and still walking.







Girl called 911 because her brother was breaking things in his bedroom. He was 23. Not pleased to see the police show up and he did not want to answer any questions or make any statements. He had some mental health issues. Anyway, no crime had been committed so we called the girl's mother who was at work and reported all was calm now and we were leaving. The mother had a request for us though: "Before you go, can you tell my daughter she needs to be going to school?" Well that's not really our job, mom, but okay. I looked at the girl and aksed "What grade are you in?" She looked down at the ground and mumbled "Ninth grade.." I should mention this was all going down at 1 pm on a school day. "And you're not at school because why?" She mumbled to us "I just don't like going to school." Myself and the other officer lit into her, and made her regret ever calling 911.





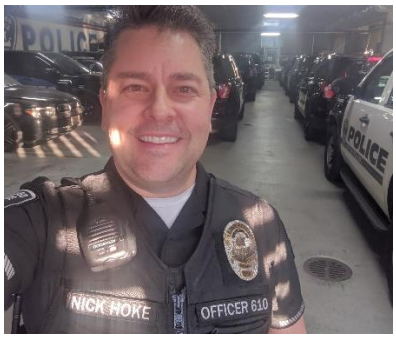
My collar microphone, clipped to my shoulder lapel and connected by a cord to my portable radio, was in a perfect place to have a conflict with the office telephone handset I was using; while yapping into the phone with somebody about something, the phone handset pressed into the microphone transmit button, very effectively broadcasting my conversation out onto the police radio airwaves for everybody to hear, and I of course was oblivious. It happens. In fact, the percentage of cops who have had an "open mic" or "hot mic" experience like that at some point in their careers: about 100 percent.



There I am at the local mobile home trailer park, trying to track down one of our resident scroungers who had the frequent habit of scrounging things for himself that he usually had no right to take, under the cover of darkness. Scrounger was not home, he was probably out dumpster diving or looking for more used tires to liberate from behind auto repair businesses. His buddy was there, though, and since the current case wasn't serious enough to warrant an arrest, I asked his buddy to just pass along a message, which he helpfully agreed to do. I pointed to my name tag on my uniform. "Tell your friend that OFFICER HOKE was here, and OFFICER HOKE (pointing to my name tag again) says stop stealing tires from behind the auto repair business or else I'm going to come back here and make his miserable life more miserable." We both kind of laughed because it was no secret that I had in fact arrested Scrounger more than several times during my career, for stealing junk that didn't belong to him. The guy promised to yell at the scrounger for me, and then he says "Hey Officer Hoke do you remember me?" Oh great, this again. I said "Nope." He said "You arrested me and I went to prison. I was doing stupid stuff. I got locked up for 68 months." Holy shit. I had to ask if I had heard him right: "Did you just say sixty-eight months?!?" He confirmed it. "Yeah, I deserved it. I stole a lot of things." I looked at him and then remembered him. I knew that he had gone off to prison after I had caught him and booked him into the jail, but I had no idea it was for over five years. Part of me wanted to ask "Uh…so we good now?" but he acknowledged he had been stupid in his younger years and he was reformed now. Still awkward as hell though, when somebody says something like that to you, you know? No, you probably don't know. Well, if you're a cop you know the feeling. (It's weird!)







An 88 year old lady called 911 to report falling for a scam. I went to her house. "I sent some money to California," she sadly told me. I asked how much. "Sixteen thousand five hundred dollars." I didn't know whether to laugh or cry. "You sent $16,500 dollars' worth of gift cards to a scammer in California?!?" I asked. She looked sadder and said "No it wasn't gift cards it was cash…$100 dollar bills." When her adult daughter found out, FedEx was called to cancel the delivery. The FedEx operator entered the number, and said she was sorry, but they were too late. The driver had scanned the bar code and classified it as "Delivered"…just 4 minutes' earlier. The package was addressed to random house in California; I had the local cops there respond and they reported the homeowner was not related to the scam. Home surveillance recordings showed the FedEx driver never even made it to the doorstep; the package was intercepted and signed for out of camera range. No way to trace who the scammer was. Case closed. An hour later the victim called me again "He's really mad, he didn't get the money I sent him!" I assured her that oh, yes, he most certainly did get the $16,500 dollars in cash, and now that he knew you were so gullible, he's going to try and convince you to sent another $16,500 dollars. "Don't take any more calls from that guy! And get a new phone number!" I told her.








The manager of the tool and equipment rental store wanted charges filed against a customer for failing to retun some rented property. The manager called us a few times per year when items were not returned and the contract the customers signed were violated. In this case, the property rented but not retured was two hoses for a pressure washer. After some phone calls from the police, the customer decided to return the hoses and avoid a criminal prosecution for theft. But the daily fees had accrued and the new total bill after a couple months was close to $600 dollars. The stupid hoses MSRP was maybe only $75 dollars each...




A dispute between family members led to a police intervention. While interviewing one of the parties involved, I noticed, uh, there were several large healthy marijuana plants growing in a bedroom. However, they were medicinal, and the new state law allowed it. So now it was legal. And unlike cops in about 47 other states, it was a complete non-issue for me.





Found in a parking lot: a very large ziplock bag of methamphetamine, slightly split open. Total volume equal to about a quart; not an insignificant amount of drugs. Must have fallen off of a hiding spot in somebody's car? I collected the bag and contents, repackaged it safely and put it into evidence. Nobody ever called 911 report a missing bag of meth, or to ask if maybe we had picked it up? It's a sure thing that at least one person was most likely very, very upset when they got to wherever they were going and found their meth was gone. The dollar amount of all that was equal to a very nice brand new car, at least.




I got dispatched to a suicide-in-progess call at a residence: A teenager was reporting is dad had announced he was giong to kill himself; went into his bedroom, locked the door, and nobody could get the door open now. I responded and found dad was totally alive and well. Turns out he had gotten frustrated with his son, told him sarcastically that he was being driven crazy enough to just die, and then he locked himself in his bedroom for some peace and quiet. Son was autistic and could not understand sarcasm; he totally thought his dad was being totally serious. I wasn't even mad; I thought the son's misinterpretation and subsequent overreaction was actually kind of funny.





A new-car customer called 911 from the new caller dealership, something about how they couldn't get their keys back. I went to the dealership, which had a reputation as being full of smarmy slimy salesmen- the stereotypical worst-case salesmen everybdoy hated, and sure enough it was ANOTHER case where the new customers, a married couple, got halfway through the buying process and the salesman and manager had taken their trade-in car out for a test drive to determine the value but price negotiations had stalled and the process was getting dragged on for more than a couple hours and the people wanted to leave but the salesman and the manager, in an event to prevent a lost sale, did not want to return their car keys to them and were still trying to talk them into buying a new car. I had to explain AGAIN to the manager that he could not legally keep anbody's keys unless or until the owners wanted to actually finish the deal, which they didn't, so give them their stupid keys back already or somebody wearing a managers name tag is going to get arrested for theft. That deplorable sales tactic was still being used because social media had not been invented yet and the car dealership could get away with it, usually.





Local resident had his pickup truck stolen from his driveway during the night. He was mad. Mad at the thief, and then he got mad at the police for not finding his stolen truck after a couple weeks. I tried to explain to him that the truck was obviously out my jurisdiction, otherwise I would have found it. For the record, I did feel bad he never got his truck back, but what could I do?







Car wash manager got caught on video taking cash payments from customers, and pocketing the money. When his boss confonted him with the video evidence, he tried explaining those were cash tips for him. Not believable. He was fired from his job and a police report was sent to the municipal prosecutor for theft. Funny thing was, the manager was a super religious guy.

Idiot criminal in the back seat of my patrol car, shaking his head at his own stupidity: "I don't do drugs anymore, so I can't blame any of this on drugs. Apparently I'm just a stupid dumbass when I'm sober, too."



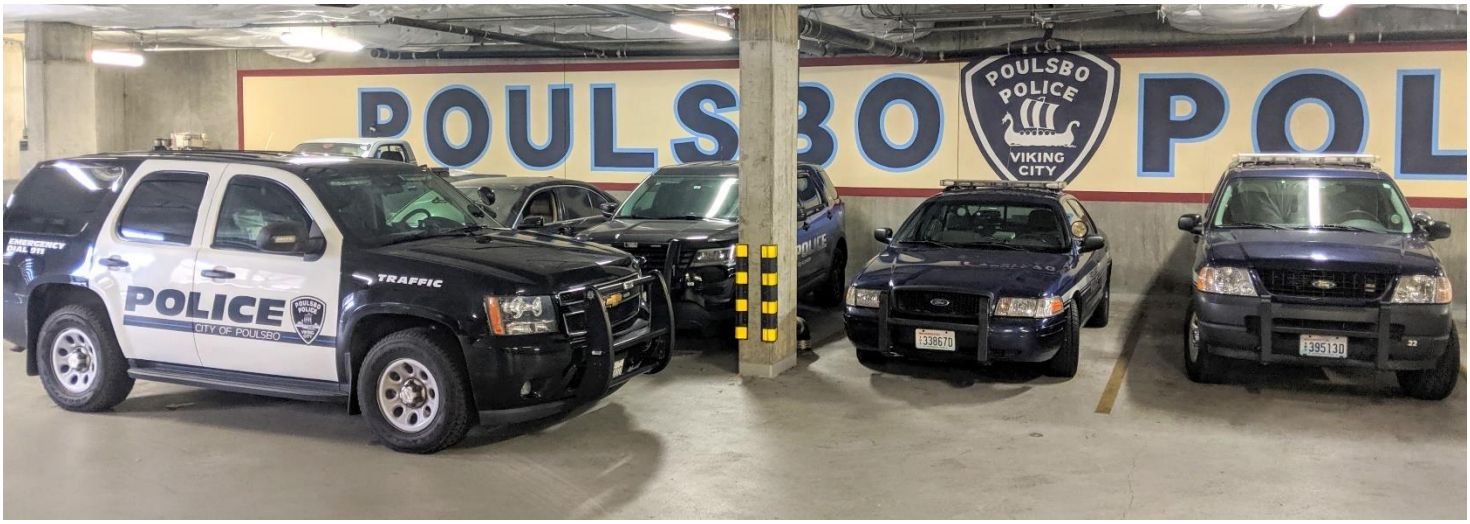


Midnight: My shift ended an hour earlier and I'm home in bed, trying to get some sleep because my next shift starts in the morning. Unfortunately I was in a high-speed pursuit just a couple hours earlier and I'm learning that it takes more than a few hours to digest and dissolve all the adreneline still in my system. This experience was repeated several dozen times during my career – not the high speed chases part, but similar heart thumping situations like suicide calls, messy car accidents, combative resistive violent suspects, and close calls. Part of being a cop means losing a lot of sleep.





Also part of being a cop: having a lot of police-related dreams at night. For better or worse. Ususally worse. Any kind of stressful police activity you can imagine…yeah…that's happened in my dreams. Literally hundreds of times. When they got too intense, I'd wake up and put an end to the dreams to stop them. Or when the police-related dreams were just normal and not bad enough to wake me up in the middle of the night, I would make an effort to try and not remember them when I did wake up. More than once I'd joke with other professionals that I'd gladly participate in a dream-exchange program – they could have all of my exciting police dreams and I'd take their work related dreams – accounting or banking, garbage truck driving, retail sales…anything would be better than having stressful dreams involving getting violent with bad guys, you know?



Back in the old days when just about everybody's car had a metal antenna pole for their analog FM radios, there were these things called antenna balls that some people stuck onto the tops. Orange Unical/Union 76 were the original and most popular ones back in the 1970's, eclipsed in popularity by Jack in Box antenna balls in the mid 1990's. Google it. Anyway, one day somebody called 911 to file a theft report, I took the call, and listened to an irate person tell me that this was the third goddamn time somebody had stolen one of their Jack in the Box antenna balls from their car while it was parked in a public parking lot and now they wanted the police to Do Something About It Already.

Somebody called 911 mildly freaking out that there was a car cruising slowly by in their neighborhood, and the driver was taking pictures! Of houses! Oh no! Okay first of all, it's not illegal to take pictures of houses. Second, that's in the job description of professional realtors and appraisers. They do that all the time. You don't need to call 911 when that happens, okay? How many calls like that did I get dispatched to? About three per year.







Another common call was people reporting their boyfriend or girlfriend or ex-husband or ex-wife was not returning the kids on time to them after custody visitation. If there was a judge-approved parenting plan in effect, then the violation was a civil matter, not a criminal case for the police to get involved in. "You should go tell your lawyer" I'd advise them. If there was no parenting plan because the parents were too stupid or lazy or poor to get one filed, then the complainant was really out of luck because since the other parent had equal custody, they had every right to the kids. 'You should go get a lawyer" I'd tell them then.







A dad called 911 to report his teeneage son had been punched by another teenager for no apparent reason. After hearing the dad's version of what he had heard happened, I suggested that he might want to re-consider having a police investigation done, since there was a distinct possibility he might not like what the investigation unovered. He thought about it for a few hours and recontacted me, and said that he did want me to proceed. I started interveiwing witnesses and halfway through my investigation when it started to become clear his son had more than some culpability, the dad asked me to never mind the whole thing please. Sigh..okay, case closed.





I was at a defensive tactics course one day many years ago and although I forgot pretty much everything the instuctor taught us that day I do remember clearly one thing he explained to the officers lined up in front of him: "A fight is nothing more or less than a series of mistakes made while trying to subdue somebody." That stuck with me. He meant that if you get into a "fight" with somebody, what is going on is you both are trying submission techniques that are not working out. He suggested skipping the whole "fighting" part and just go straight to the knockout punch or the perfect take-down move to prevent or end all of the grappling and scuffling attempts. That should be the goal, every time. Best accomplished by considering it as a kind of a physical chess match; you should plan your moves out ahead and be ready to change tactics on the fly without hesitation if a method doesn't work out.

Traffic stop time; I've caught a motorist going way over the speed limit. He's an active-duty military officer, and I don't feel like completely ruining his day with a ticket, mostly because he seems genuinely sorry that he got caught. So I just yell at him for a bit. During my scolding, I think back to when I was an enlisted sailor in the navy, still a teenager. If you had told me back then that someday I'd be in a position where I could yell at a military officer I would have thought that would be the most amazing and mind-blowing thing. And then to make it really interesting, I noticed on the officer's drivers license that he had been born well after I had already started my police career.






A driver crashed into another car but kept driving; a hit and run. It happened in another jurisdiction and he was headed into mine; I was alerted and able to intercept him as he arrived in my town. I stopped him and quickly determined that he was completely zonked out of his mind not on alcohol, but on some serious medication. State Patrol Troopers arrived and took him into custody. The front of his minivan had massive damage to it, from his bumper-car style of driving. What made it memorable was that not only did the guy not remember hitting the other car, he was incapable of seeing that his minvan was smashed up. We made him look at the still-smoking mangled and smashed mess and marveled how his brain could not compute there was fresh damage there. He literally could not recognize there was damage to his car. I called his wife to come get the minvan; she was quite distressed to see her husband was so far gone on some kind of meds that he just about in zombie mode.




Back in the old days there was a detox facility where we could take drunk folks to dry out safely; the staff there would give them a bunk and watch them closely for a day or so. It wasn't any good for curing alcoholics, it was mostly just to keep them safe from wandering out into roads and getting run over while completely shitfaced. You'd might be surprised how common it was to get dispatched to drunk people laying down in the road somewhere; I'd have to take off a shoe and sock to count the number of times I heard calls for drunks passed out alongside a road, or yes, actually in a road. And yes, sometimes they'd get run over.





Also back in the good old days there was a secure facility where we could take runaway teenagers who were chronically delinquent; the place was a juvenile group home, fully staffed with locked doors. They would hold onto the kids there for a couple days and make arrangements to get them and the family resources to help solve their problems. When budget cuts ended that program, our only option when we caught runaways was to take them back home, and yep, sometimes those little rascals would of course just run away again a half hour after we returned them home.






Crazy lady walked away from her house, didn't come back, and nobody knew where she went. Left behind her 15 year old daughter. After a couple days the police were called. We considered her wandering off as a little suspicious and alarming, so she was classified as a missing person and everybody started looking for her. After about a week she showed up back at her house; she had been in a psychiatric facility a couple counties' over, locked up because she was so crazy. Crazy enough to not bother mentioning to the staff that oh, by the way I have a 15 year daughter back home who has no idea where I am right now. The officer in charge of that case was me, and I was rather irked that she had been alive and safe, and we had no idea. But what can you do?



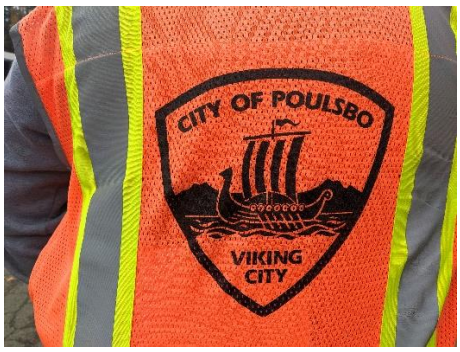


Guy with a rifle and shotgun is walking around downtown. Not menacingly, just walking, being proud to be an American. We watch him from a distance; he had already identified himself to us beforehand and told us that he'd be marching back and forth for an hour or so, once a week. Aside from freaking a few folks out, it was okay. And if you're wondering how the police generally feel about folks walking around out in public with long guns…well..we'd prefer they just don't.



Finally, I had found an unlocked missile silo. There were several of them on the old abandoned army base, a, relic from the Cold War. The Nike Ajax missiles were designed as an anti air defense system, in service from 1958 to 1968. Now 30 years later the base, formerly known as Nike 1B, 2C/30A/12L-A S-81 (out of 286 total bases) was completely overgrown and trees were claiming back the barracks and motor pool buildings. The current owner had bought the property as surplus from the government, and sometimes when he checked in on it he'd neglect to lock the chain link main gate on his way out; whenever I was on patrol and found it open I'd go in and explore. The buildings were falling apart and some local teens had also discovered the place, so there was a lot of graffiti everywhere. And there, finally one day, one of the silos was open. And completely flooded full of water. So…nothing really to see there. The owner later sold the property to a developer and a Walmart and Home Deport were built there, after the giant concrete and metal silos had been broken up and dug out of the ground.







Pro tip for you folks out there considering a career in shoplifting for fun or profit: If choose to commit your crime whilst wearing a very distinctive fur trapper style hat – the kind with ear flaps, even – and you can get away from the store manager and successfully flee the scene on foot…I'd highly suggest ditching the hat. Because when the police start looking for you..if you still have the hat on…you are most definitely going to get caught.







A car has pulled over onto the side of the road, but half of it is still in the lane of travel. I can see it's an old person driving. I sigh, and get in behind the car and turn on my lights. I already know exactly what is happening; the new law about not holding your cell phone in your hands anymore had just gone into effect, creating a new trend among some older drivers: when their phone rings, they stop driving immedietely to answer the phone. I walk up the car and sure enough, grandma is talking on the phone. "Hey that's great you stopped driving to answer your phone," I told her. "But if you could, I dunno, drive for another 100 feet and go into that parking lot and get out of the roadway…that'd be great." Grandma apologized and complied. I sighed, because that was about the 10th one I'd had in the last month.





Late at night. Dark. Cold. Raining. A little windy – just enough to drop a very large alder tree branch out of a tree. Branch was about 13 feet long and thicker than my arm. It landed right in the middle of a windshield of a car driving underneath at the time. Seriously freaked out the two girls in the car. I got the branch out of their windshield for them.



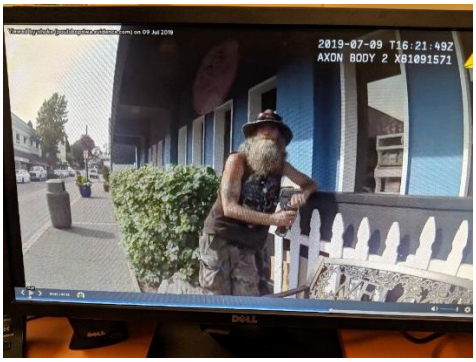




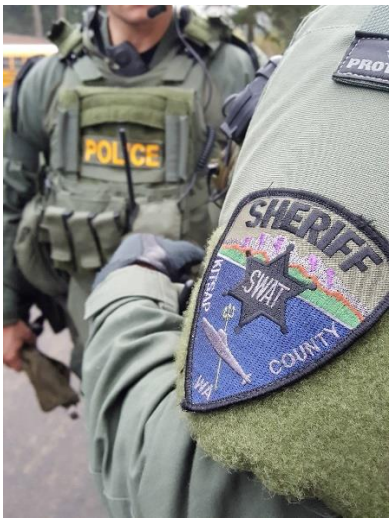


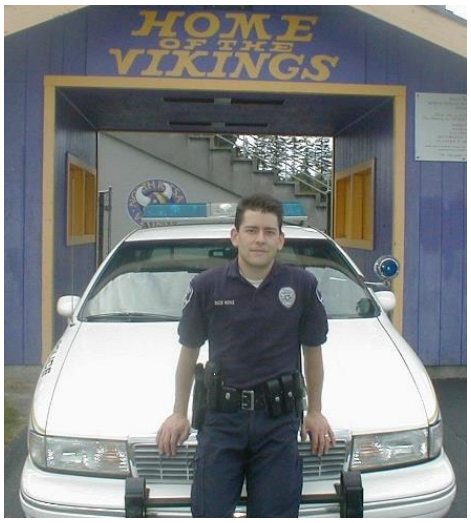
Court is in session. I'm checking names on the docket and screening folks in as they show up. Casually chatting I said to one guy "Yep you're on this sheet here…looks like you have date with destiny," and he replied - in all naïve seriousness – "No, I'm here for court." Then another defendant walks in and I notice she's wearing fleece Star Wars pajama pants. Which actually kind of matched her sweatshirt. Surprising? Nope, not at all. You'd be surprised (maybe?) how people dress for their court appearances; very few bothered to put on "nice" clothes; the vast majority walked in wearing regular street clothes, to include baseball caps.





Lady called 911 to report a suspicious bag. On top of the community mailboxes stand. I called her back. "My husband is in the military, and we've been told that if we see something, we should say something." Long silence on my end. As I considered thanking her profusely like "Yes! Yes! Thank God you called because that bag could absolutely most definitely be a bomb! Planted there by Al Qaeda! They snuck in a terrorist to Western Washington and have targeted your neighborhood mailboxes in Poulsbo!" – I didn't say any of that out loud, of course. I went to the mailboxes and found the Suspicious Bag gone. I guess the Al Qaeda terrorists had changed their minds.





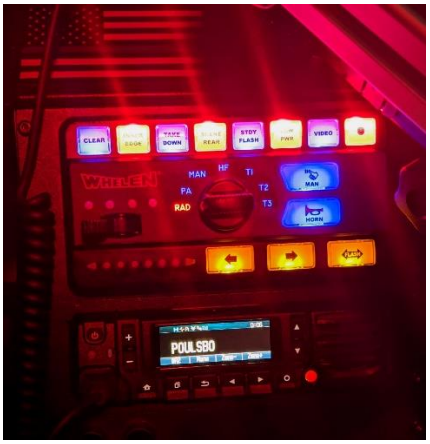


A guy got caught shoplifting from a local store; the security guard called me and I responded to the loss prevention office in the store where the accused thief was signing the standard civil forfeiture form, acknowledging the state law that allows the store to assess a hefty penalty fine to the alleged thief. I then gave the guy such a stern talking-to that he started to cry. He deserved it though. I didn't feel too bad. Until he wouldn't stop crying; I actually began to think I had pushed him too far and then I even started to worry that he was going to get all suicidal on me – he was that distressed. So I had to tone down my lecturing at that point for him and tell him tomorrow was going to be a much better day.





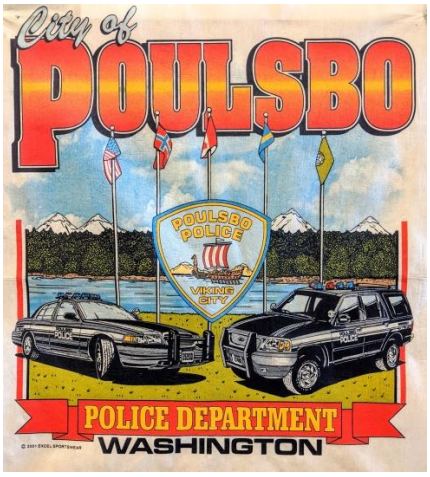
Another one of my coworkers had inflicted some law and order on a citizen and it made the front page news, and not in a good way. A local newspaper reporter then filed a public disclosure request to get any and every scrap of paper from that officer's personnel file, just to dig up dirt. Written reprimands, disciplinary action, evaluations..it's all fair game to be released to the public. I saw it happen several times over my career..thank god it never happened to me though.





A general contractor of a big construction company reported vandalism to one of his bulldozers on a construction site: some activist, upset about new houses being built, had poured sand into the gas tank. By the time the damage was discovered, the engine had been run a bit and was completely destroyed. Suspect: unknown. New engine replacement: $26,000 dollars.





The day before I had to testify in court for a criminal trial, the defendant decided to plead guilty. Good thing, the case was over 2 years old and specific details were a bit hazy in my memory, although I did have my original police report to refresh my memory. He had some other cases pending, and he combined them all to get a 7 year sentence.










The county coroner told me about a guy who had recently killed himself with a circular saw, of all things. “He clamped it into a vise upsisde down, jammed the guard open, and lowered his neck onto the spinning blade. Made a huge mess in his garage.”







The scene: A Mexican restaurant. The problem: a burglar had broke out the bottom glass door panels in the side of the building during the night, and low crawled to the cash register area to steal the cash on hand. I know that’s what happened because the owner was perplexed the alarm system had not gone off. So I low crawled from the door to the register with the alarm on; no trip. As soon as I stood up though, the motion sensor got me. So whoever did it, totally knew where the motion sensors were.






Me, at another Mexican restaurant crime scene, after hours. In the kitchen I come across a large plastic bin – garbage can size – of tortilla chips. The kind you get when they bring you chips and salsa when you first sit down. I was kind of stunned. A giant bin of chips..with no lid on. Just…sitting there in the kitchen. No lid. Open to the air. No lid. Wow. I thought it might be for the old discarded chips, but no..that was the source of the new chips. Darn it that had been my favorite Mexican restaurant, too.






A big Cadillac sedan is on its side in the middle of the road. The 15 year kid trying to drive it took a corner too sharp, hit a huge rock, and got halfway to flipping the car. Turns out his older brother was in court for some kind of a charge, and for some reason handed dad’s car keys to his younger brother who then went out on a joyride. The kid also had some alcohol in his backpack. Not a good day for him at all.

The guy who called 911 anytime – AND EVERY TIME - a neighbor parked even just a little too close to a fire hydrant. He demanded we write parking tickets immediately. Sometimes I did, and sometimes I just found the offending owner of the car and asked them to move it please. The complainant got PISSED when I did that. Because he wanted us to write tickets, dammit!







The man who kept calling 911 to self-report that he was driving drunk. Yep, that's weird. But every time he called (several over the course of a month or so) he was not even driving. He was actually at home, in his living room. Drunk, yeah. Driving, no. He just kept calling to say he was driving drunk. In another city. Every time I banged on his front door to get him, he (wisely) hunkered down in his house and didn't make a noise.







The Naval Lt. Commander who had a temper tantrum in his front yard during a divorce, throwing things around on the lawn and driveway. Caused a scene in the neighborhood. Naval Investigative Services agents swarmed in and took over.



The same Lt. Commander, 6 months later, had another tantrum and poured gasoline on a pile of stuff in his driveway, almost setting a responding police car on fire in the process. He went to jail.





Dentist called 911 to report a burglary. What was stolen? His tank of nitrous oxide. Which was kind of funny.





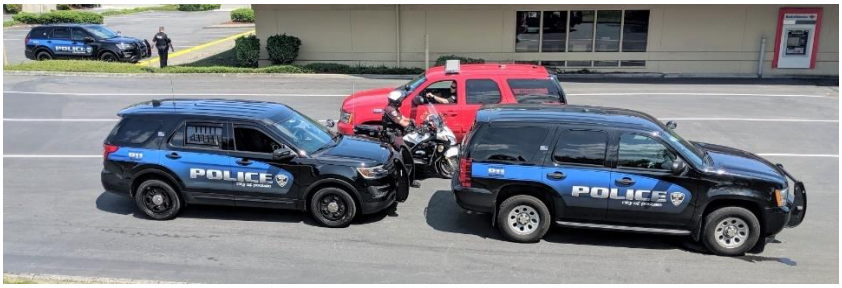
I pulled over a car once, I think it had just a burned out tail light, and as I called in the stop over the radio, the driver put both his hands out his open window, a classic "Look I'm not holding any guns in my hands" which of course made me think I was dealing with a bad hombre who had experience with police and felony stops, probably from an inner city like Oakland or Chicago, and when I walked up to the car very cautiously with my gun almost upholstered, I was relieved to see it was actually a recently retired county deputy, who started laughing uproariously in a "gotcha" sort of way. I agreed it was funny as hell, too.







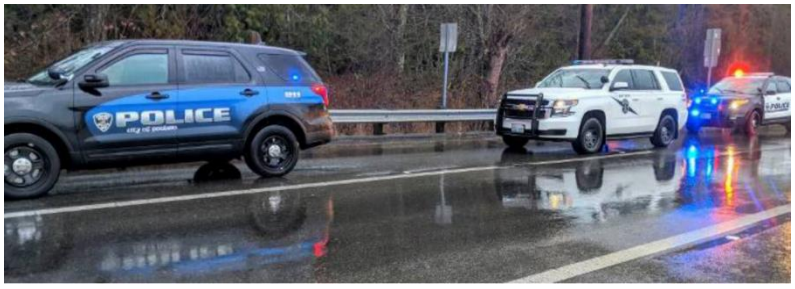
The drunk navy petty officers who left a July 4th bonfire going past midnight, unattended, in the middle of a neighborhood. In the front yard of their rental house. Things got really interesting when I had the ranking one call his division Chief on the phone and self-report their stupidity. From several feet away I could hear the Chief yelling on the phone, demanding they all report to him in the morning. Which was I'm sure not in their original plans, based on their levels of intoxication.





Bank teller thinks the young lady in the drive through is trying to cash in a fraudulent homemade check. The fact the lady is wearing sunglasses and a costume wig is also raising questions. And the two dudes in the car with her are wearing hats and sunglasses and acting nervous. Bank teller shows bogus check to bank manager. Bank manager recognizes the name of the account holder, and agrees the check is fake. Then the bank manager sees the account holder; he's actually in line in the lobby on unrelated business. Bank manager shows him the check. He confirms that is not actually his check and he gets mad enough to run out to his truck and block the suspects in the drive thru. Would have worked too, but the two dudes in the car tell the female suspect in the wig to back out in reverse at high speed. As they left the parking lot they spot the police officers arriving; one guy in the back seat bailed and ran away. I caught the female driver and the dude in the passenger seat; they went off to jail. Sometimes it's hard to be a criminal in a small town.





The outlaw motorcycle gang member who went off the road one night while riding with his gang. He went down an embankment at full speed, hit a tree, and was DRT. ("Dead Right There") I thought about that one a lot afterward; specifically, how easy it would be to do murder by motorcycle. Like, if you were in a motorcycle gang and you wanted to whack one of your guys, you simply get him really drunk, maybe spike his drinks with some heavy grade sleeping pills, and then get him to go out on a ride. When you get to a good curve in the road with a steep embankment, just come alongside and give his bike a good kick to veer him down the hill into a tree. An autopsy would show presumed impairment by alcohol and medications, and who would suspect murder when it looks like an accident?





There I was in the police station, logged into the county jail's phone call recording database. I'm listening to phone calls made by a woman I had caught stealing purses from a church; she had been calling her mother to complain about the jail. I was hoping to get some kind of admission or confession, which would have been legally admissible since the prisoner phone calls are not protected private speech. At that moment, our building janitor/cleaning lady came in to clean the squad room. It was her daughter that I had arrested. And was listening to.







Me, looking past several paramedics into a guy's bedroom. His sick wife had unexpectedly died in her sleep next to him and when he woke up she was cold. Now he was kneeling on the floor next to the bed, holding her in his arms and crying. She was only a few years older than my wife.







Woman calls 911 to report harassing voice mails on her phone. I go to her house and talk to her. She plays the voicemails, they're all like "You bitch if you snapchat my husband one more goddamned time I am coming for you so help me god you bitch!" I looked at the woman. 'Wow, she seems really mad. What's her problem with you?" I asked. Woman looks down and quietly admits "I've been sleeping with her husband."







Car v. Bicycle accident scene. Bicyclist was hit so hard he was knocked out of his shoes. Do this job long enough, you'll see that more than once. Or in my case, several times. Skateboarder v car; yep; both shoes went flying. Pedestrian v car; yep, one still-laced tight shoe went flying an alarmingly long distance away. What a freaky thing to see.





The local school district received a call from the out-of-state school bus factory, asking when they were going to send the payment for the new school buses they had sold and delivered to the district. Which was odd, since the district's finance department had already paid them $238,000 dollars. Finance department had got the official invoice from the transportation department and approved it. Uh....turns out that was an email hack and the invoice was not the real one, and the $238,000 was sent off to a scammer. In Africa. Who did not share any of the proceeds with the school bus factory.





Traffic stop: the Hispanic driver is claiming to know no English as I'm trying to explain why I felt his driving was bad. Finally I asked him if he would understand me better if I just wrote it all down? He said yes. So I wrote him a ticket.





The clean-cut looking sailor I pulled over one night, right at the end of my shift, at the end of my workweek. I was quite ready to cut him loose with a quick warning to slow down but then an ignition interlock started beeping for his attention, right while I was standing there. Worst time ever for him; I was of course quite compelled at that point to run his name and when I found out his license was suspended in relation to the recent DUI he had got, he was issued a huge ticket and his car was impounded. All because his interlock beeped at the exact wrong time for him.





Guy crashed his car into a traffic light pole. Knocked one of the large traffic signal lights loose, dangling by a just a wire over the intersection. I suggested to the fire dept. guys that they cut it off, so they put their fire truck under it, reached up, and cut it loose. That solved the problem of the dangling light, but we learned that day that if a light signal assembly is cut off, every other light in the intersection will go into flashing red mode, which really clogged up the traffic for us then.





Photo below is from the scene where an older gentleman had bled out –by his own volition- and died next to his house. I tried to save him; kneeling in the puddle of his blood, doing CPR, but I had no success because he didn't have enough blood left in his body anymore to circulate. He had suicided himself with, of all things, a very tiny keychain sized utility knife. The blade was about the size of your smallest fingernail. Applied with a enough motivation to one's cephalic veins, you too can create a mess like this. He wife, nice old lady, had found him. She was pretty upset. She mentioned that he had been very depressed lately.



Later on I thought about it a lot (you get blood soaked into your clothes while trying to save a life, yeah..you'll do some reflecting..) and I concluded that IF the scene was actually a homicide and not a suicide, it would have been just about a perfect crime. IF the old lady wanted her husband dead (Lemme stress this was NOT the case here, I'm just thinking creatively) it would have been pretty easy for her to overdose grandpa with, say some prescription sleeping pills to knock him out, and then she could slice up his arms and bleed him out. Then call the police, cry and act sad, and of course the cops are going to think it was a simple suicide and nothing worse; who would suspect a crying old distraught grandma? Just an old guy who checked out. No autopsy, no further questions... Hmmmm...perfect crime...





Me, responding to an aid call of an unresponsive/unconscious customer in a tanning salon. Dispatch notes on the computer don't indicate if it's a medical condition or a drug overdose. I quickly arrive, park out front and I'm walking toward the front door when aid crew guys arrive. They immediately start giving me shit because I got there first. "The one call it's a guarantee you cops always get to first are the ones with unconscious women in the tanning salon!" I told them this was the first time I've been to the tanning salon for medical response. They continue in a good natured way "Car crashes, you guys always take your time and we get there first. But every single call here, you cops drop everything to get here as fast as you can!" I stopped outside the front door. "Really? This is not the first call here?" They brush past me with their gear and equipment and go in the front door. "Yeah, and you guys beat us here every single time there's an unconscious women in a tanning bed! Funny how that happens!" I got out my notebook and scribbled down "Reminder: let the fire dept. guys get to the tanning salon calls first.."





Old woman living in a nursing home. Her husband is in one wing with Alzheimer's, she's in another section. She visits him occasionally. She's in a wheelchair, not because she's invalid but because, well, she's lazy. I'm not being judgmental; that's what she told me. I'm there because the staff had caught her and her adult son who was visiting her, uh...they got caught having sex. Yup, with each other. I call the detectives, since this case is going to require some serious interviewing. Detectives show up. My synopsis for them is a simple note in which I wrote: "I. Can't. Even." The old lady did not believe her actions were incestuous; she told us "This is how I show my love to my son." Son got banished from the nursing home. Police report goes to the prosecutors but the prosecutors can't determine which is the suspect and/or which is the victim, so no charges were filed.





Went to dead man's house once; a mid-50's guy who had died in bed. On the floor next to his nightstand, covered in spider webs and dust was his CPAP oxygen mask, totally ignored and unused. Next to the bed, a well-used and full ashtray. Outside, the coworker who had found him dead was furiously sucking on a lit cigarette. I looked at him with a very critical eye. "Really?" I asked. The guy got defensive and replied "Hey my grandfather smoked his whole life, he's still alive." Before I could say anything he then added "And my other grandfather, the one who never smoked, he died years ago. Of cancer! So yeah, I'm a smoker!"





Suicide by car late one rainy night by the motel along the highway. A retired Alaska State Trooper was the dead guy. He had been staying in the motel by the highway. Witnesses said he had stood by the side of the road, looking like he was waiting for a big-sized vehicle to come along. Finally he got tired of waiting and jumped out in front of a Ford Aerostar minivan. The poor driver of the van said he saw the guy's elbow hit his A-frame pillar by the windshield and sure enough, there was a fist-sized dent in the metal. Actually an elbow-sized dent. I imagine the elbow had some damage too. What with it being a mini-van, the guy didn't die right away. Took some time. Pro tip: if you're going to suicide yourself using a moving vehicle, use something bigger than a minivan.

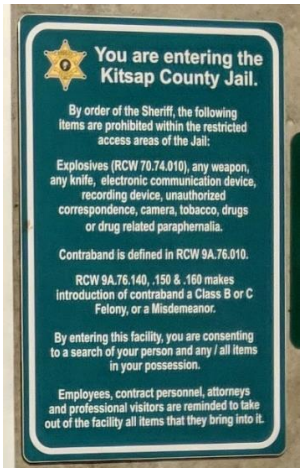
You ever get called out to an apartment to deal with a really old lady who's upset about I can't remember what and she feels like she has to show you a bruise so she suddenly drops her pants to show it off?





The one where the woman called 911 to report her husband had gotten really mad at her and had thrown her cell phone onto the floor, destroying it. Myself and another officer arrive on the front porch. Guy comes out, closes the door behind him. I suggest we go inside and talk about it. He replied we're not going in the house because we don't have a search warrant. So I detain him in cuffs and take him out to my car and leave him there. Knock on door again; wife answers and lets us in. Before I go in I look back to my car and make good eye contact with the guy cuffed in the back. Successfully resisted the urge to stick my tongue out at him. After she told us what happened, I took him to jail. He was a diver in the navy.





A K9 tracking dog is hot on the trail of a fugitive who ran into the woods; I was running with the handler and dog, acting as the spotter and letting the other officers know where we were in the woods, since it's my jurisdiction and I know the area a little better than the K9 handler. The dog eventually found the guy hiding in the bushes, too tired to keep running. The moron had made the dog's job much, much easier because he had shed several articles of clothing during his escape; the dog found every one which of course confirmed we were on the right track and really imprinted into the dog's nose which scent exactly was the one to track. So. If you ever run from the cops and there's a possibility a fur missile is launched after you, do not discard your hat and then hoody and then long sleeve shirt as you run away!





I opened the door to the aid car and climbed inside to check with the EMT's, working on an injured patient who a couple minutes' earlier had just been another driver in traffic, until somebody not paying enough attention crashed into them violently and now they had become a victim, and I needed their ID and some questions answered so I could process the scene and properly document everything in a police report. How many times did I repeat a scene like this? Several dozen. Usually the patients were still conscious and able to talk to me, other times, not so much.

Two creeps in one day; first one was an older gentleman in his late 50's, who was flirting with a 17 year old girl who got weirded out. To make it worse, she looked like she was about 14. I told the old guy it was not illegal but it certainly was immoral by society's standards and he'd better knock it off. Several hours later I meet Creep #2 who was a 23 year old weirdo at the children's park, swinging on the swings alone, and taking pictures of the little kids. Again, not illegal, but we told him he'd better knock that shit off or some irate dad was going to make him stop without bothering to call the police next time.







We got a report of a dye pack found in a ditch. The kind of dye pack that is surrounded by fake money and used by banks to foil bank robbers. I respond and yep, there is an exploded bank dye pack in the ditch; basically a stack of 100 dollar bills blown out from the small explosive charge in the middle, and everything was bright pink. Obviously discarded from a recent bank robbery, but we had no records of any robberies in the county. Or the region. The mystery deepens and then finally somehow a local bank manager hears about our mystery and explains that it was his branch's dye pack; they had done a training with it and at the conclusion they threw it away in the dumpster. Clearly somebody found it in there and it fished it out, but then realized it was worthless so it got tossed. The bank manager and the police agreed that from now on, any practice dye packs should be sealed up and then thrown away so as to not confuse the hell out of the police if it turns up.



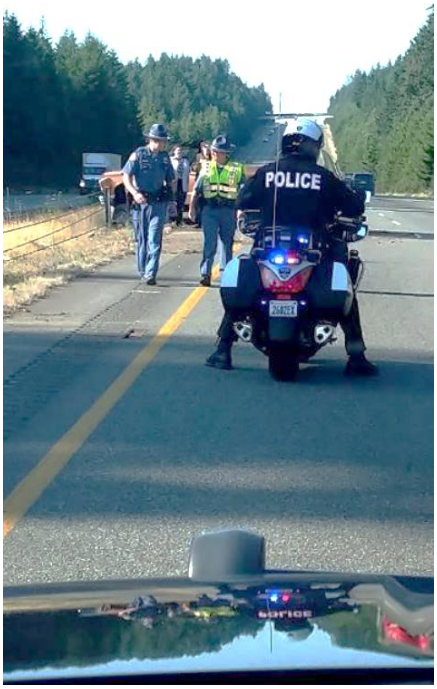


I pulled over a woman for not wearing her seat belt. Then I quickly found five other violations. I only wrote her for 3; gave her a huge break on the other 2 but the total penalty amount was still $916 dollars. I felt bad. For the dog in the car, because the driver had not noticed my lights for the longest time and so I had to resort to using my siren to get her pull over. A long sustained, judicious use of the siren, cycled through several different tones. The poor dog in the passenger seat was just quivering and shaking like jello. Yeah, I felt bad about that one but it was her fault for driving with her head up her ass.



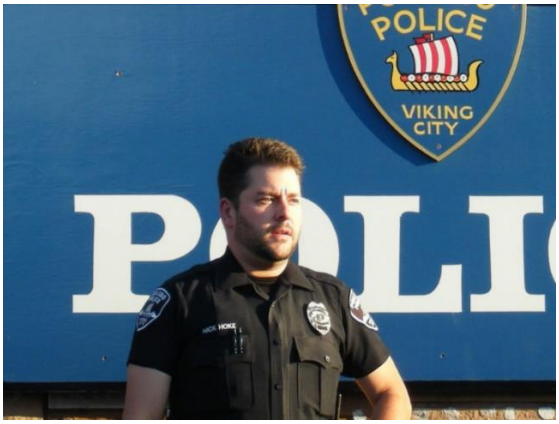
The woman in the Toyota Prius who flipped off the man in the huge pickup truck. The truck that had absolutely giant "TRUMP" for President lettering covering both sides. With giant TRUMP flags flying, too. When that wasn't enough, she started to brake check the huge pickup truck on the highway. Yes, with her Prius.





Me: arresting an 18 year schizophrenic wreaking havoc at his dad's apartment. I asked dad if his son has been officially diagnosed. Dad says no. I asked dad when did son started to go downhill? Dad says, when he was 13. But dad didn't bother to get any professional evaluations or help, he said he hoped it would just get better. I was not surprised when the son wound up in prison a year later for possession of child pornography.





The time I got called to WalMart for a juvenile shoplifter. The security staff couldn't release detained kids without contacting the police first, so I got to be present when the 16 year old boy had to explain to his father why he had been caught stealing a "Plan B/Morning After" pill for his, um, pregnant girlfriend.



The local business owner who had got into the habit of having breakfast in the McDonald's parking lot every morning. His routine included throwing the bag and food wrappers right out of his car window, even though there was a garbage receptacle literally just a few feet away. The manager decided to not make an official police report or even have me contact the guy because in the words of the manager "He's actually a great customer – he comes here every single day!"





Old pickup truck on a backroad, on fire. I get there, and I can see a little bit of smoke coming from under the hood. I peer into the wheel well and I can see some orange flame dripping and spreading a bit. I know that opening the hood would be the worst thing to do, and trying to aim a fire extinguisher in there would be for show only and pointless. The owner of the truck gets agitated that I'm not putting out the fire. I point out to him the sound of the sirens; the responding fire department trucks are getting close and are less than a minute away; they'll take care of it. I have a little bit of insider information that the truck owner is a pedophile, so I don't feel a huge obligation to even make a show of pretending to try to control the fire with my extinguisher. By the time the fire department guys arrive and get set up, the front of the truck was completely engulfed in flames 10 feet high. If you feel bad about this, go look up the word "pedophile" and maybe "karma".





I once met a very large wounded coyote in the middle of the road that I had to shoot with my .45 so I could drag it into a ditch. Not on my list of favorite experiences, because I was ridiculously paranoid that it was going to start moving or twitching when I went to grab its leg and get it off the road.

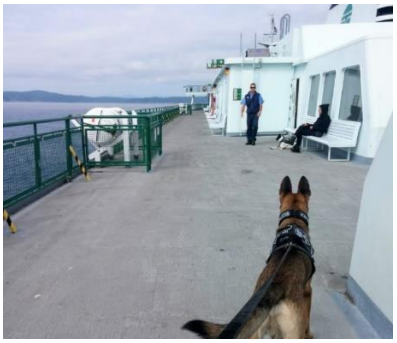






In the interest of public safety and enforcing traffic laws, I've made a lot of women drivers cry. And men drivers shake. I've made more than a few men cry, actually. Usually that was not my actual intention though.

The time in my rookie year when I confiscated several very large glass marijuana water bongs from an apartment. (Back when that shit was still totally illegal) and I learned the hard way that the water in those things should really be just dumped out before putting them in a police car trunk. Because if they tip over and spill out, um, in the trunk, the smell is going to be absolutely horrid. For a really long time.







Over the years I've seen more than several cars crashed into buildings. Almost always older folks who confuse the go pedals with the stop pedals. Curb jumping, and then smashing into solid structures. To make it really exciting, some folks go through large plate glass windows, maybe even plow over some couches or benches in a foyer or lobby too. Fortunately I've never seen any people in the buildings get hurt; damage was limited to just property. Interesting to note that if you ever have choice of sending your out-of-control car into either a building or another car, and you don't have insurance and are going to have to pay for the subsequent damage out of pocket; I'd suggest the building every time; buildings are way, way cheaper than cars.





Two Hispanic brothers in their early 20's were fighting in the trailer park. The loser called 911 to have his bigger brother arrested and put in jail. Myself and another officer arrived and talk to them. The older brother readily admitted to beating the crap out his younger brother. The older brother told us that younger brother had taken grandma's rent money and blew it all at the casino. Did we arrest the primary aggressor there? No, no we did not. We left. After telling the younger brother that he was lucky we weren't going to help beat the shit of him some more, ourselves.





I was driving home, in my patrol car. To my consternation, there was a vehicle right behind me. Was that guy following me, or just going in the same direction? I kept looking in my rearview mirror, and he kept turning when I did and we were getting closer to my driveway. No way was I going to let him see which house I was going to, so I kept driving past my house. He eventually turned away to another destination, and I turned around to go home. Paranoid? Yeah. Was he really following me? Nah. How many times was this sort of event repeated over the course of my career, with other drivers? Oh, about 60 times.





Dude in an old 4 wheel drive pickup truck went down an old narrow overgrown disused dirt road. Got down to the bottom and hit a wetland area and got too stuck for even 4x4. In an effort to back up and turn around, he ran out of gas after about an hour. That's when I came along. "What even are you doing down there anyway?" I asked the guy. "I used to come down here when I was kid, back in the day. Just got back into town and decided to relive my glory days, so to speak." He declined any of my offers to help so I left him. Even when he got gas back into the tank, he was still going to have to figure out how to get unstuck.





Office shenanigans: Crusty old Sergeant Bill (born in 1940, so he was well over 60 years old at that time) used to cover his bulletin boards and office walls with papers he thought were important. Once I noticed just how many stupid (and forgotten) things he had on his walls, I started covertly adding random new ones to his collection; things like official-looking but completely generic court case judge's opinions, old weather reports for cities on the East Coast, and recipes for obscure ethnic foods. I also came across a stash of really old phone books and I put seven of them in his office, scattered here and there and buried under piles of papers. He didn't notice those for months, and when he finally did he thought he himself had been collecting them over the years. That was almost too easy, so I experimented with other methods to mess with him. We had in our front office a rubber stamp collection, the usual sort you'd see in any office – our stamps were: "ROUTE TO PROSECUTOR" or "CLEARED FOR PUBLIC RELEASE" or "FAXED"...things like that, you know. Anyway, I found a stamp that printed out "DO NOT COPY." I guess for sending police reports to folks who legally should not copy it. "What can I do with this one?" I thought. With no other ideas, I simply stamped it on a blank sheet of paper, ran it through the copier so it was copied, and then set it in Bill's office. I was rewarded a couple days later when I saw him wandering around the office with a more than usual confused look on his face, holding that sheet of paper: a photocopy of a stamped DO NOT COPY. In desperation, he started questioning the police clerks for help: "Mary! Mary! What is this? Why is this on my desk? What does this mean? Why does this say Do Not Copy?" he kept asking the them, showing the sheet to them. He was genuinely perplexed. It was perfect. "Bill I have no idea.." they told him. They probably thought he had done that somehow himself and forgotten why.





I wasn't the only one who messed with Bill. A couple of other officers once taped an old pager under his desk. Every time they called it, it would buzz and rattle and vibrate his metal desk. He had no idea what was going on. After a few days of that, with him growing increasingly frustrated, somebody suggested it must be his electric typewriter acting up, so perhaps he should unplug it. They gave him about a half a day of peace and then they started calling the pager again, about once an hour, which caused him to just about lose his shit because his typewriter was unplugged and yet that damn noise was going off again.

Then when we got our first computer system that ran on a Windows based platform - Windows 95 – I discovered autocorrect, which was at that time was a brand new never before seen feature. I realized I could have it substitute whole words. As usual, Sgt. Bill was my target. I programmed it to change some of his more commonly used words, like "sincerely" to "sincelery" because I knew he ended most of his internal memorandums with that word especially. After a few of his memos went out misspelled, he finally caught on. The best part was when I heard him yelling to another sergeant about it once. "Greg! What the hell is going on here I don't understand this computer it keeps changing some of my words!" And Greg, who knew even less about computers than Bill, dismissively suggested it was all Bill's fault: "No Bill you somehow keep typing it wrong yourself. Try typing it slower," he offered. I watched from across the hall while Bill slowly typed out one of the key words that was vexing him and sure enough, it immediately changed it to a misspelling while he watched, with big eyes and reddening face. And Greg honestly believed (and tried to convince Bill) that it was still all his own dumb fault.





One more story about poor old Bill: We (the patrol officers) discovered that he had gotten in the habit of leaving an ignition key in his patrol car, so it be would one less thing for him to deal with when he ran out to it on a hot call. He had his remote which he'd use to lock and unlock the door, and so then it was a simple matter to just reach up and turn the ignition key without having to fumble with it first. So it was too easy for us to find his extra remote control, unlock his car, and turn the key in there to get the engine running. Then jump out, lock the car, and sit back and wait. Sooner or later old Bill would go out to his car, find it already running, and presume the most logical explanation, which is that he himself had simply forgot to turn it off. I don't know how many times we did that. Sometimes we'd turn it on and then go to his office and tell him "Hey Bill, uh, your car engine is running?" So we could witness the look of utter confusion on his face. I'm absolutely sure he thought he was losing his mind sure every time we did that.





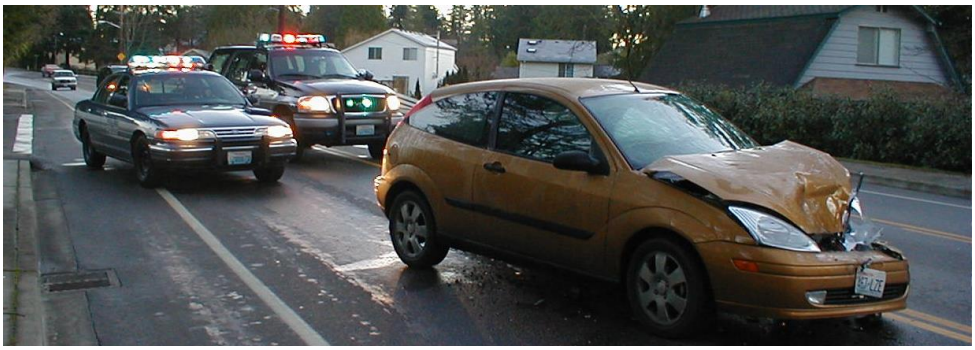


When Sgt. Bill (finally) retired, I presented to him at his retirement party a section of the workroom counter he had accidently shot with his service pistol while cleaning his handgun a few years earlier. During a later remodel I had the public works guys save that counter and I cut it into a square and framed it with a little plaque; the part that had his bullet hole in it. Sgt. Bill I'm sure was certainly hoping we had forgotten all about that incident but there it was at his party. And I suspect he never went home and told his family about that one time he shot the counter, so they were probably a bit surprised to see the framed counter with the hole in it show up. I had it nicely framed, with a little brass plaque, awarding Bill as a Counter Terrorism Expert.





Drunk woman driver missed an intersection badly and crashed off an embankment literally directly across the street from the police station; the police clerks witnessed it and called the officers. I say the woman was drunk without adding an "allegedly" because the portable breath tester that she voluntarily agreed to showed her blood alcohol level was not .10 BAC (one part alcohol per 1000 parts blood) not .20 BAC, not .30 BAC, but a very impressive .40+ BAC. If you ever look at a Blood Alcohol Content chart, you'll see they all max out a .40 BAC because anything higher than that is being a coma or dead. She was neither, which meant she was used to having a ridiculously high BAC, pretty much constantly.





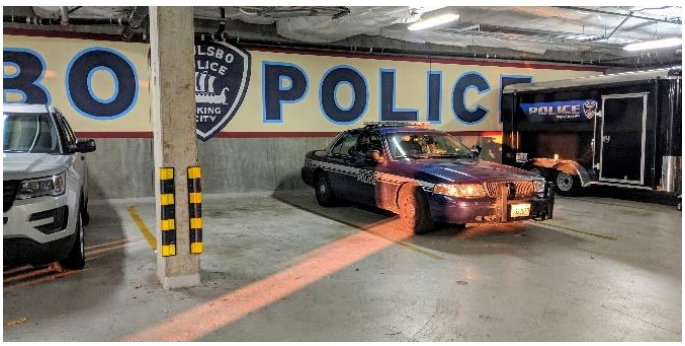
I once found a stolen car that had been ditched. Literally. Engine was still running. Car thief didn't stick around for me though.







Late at night, I think it was my first month on patrol. Guy calls 911 to report something is in his furnace. Something making noises. I show up and he points to his furnace. He's scared. I go closer and I can hear a rhythmic breathing in there. Not enough room for a person, it must be a raccoon? The homeowner and I argue over who is going to stick their head in there, I finally figure I will. I peer around in the ducting with my flashlight…nothing. After several more minutes of investigating we determine it's in fact nothing alive; there was a breeze going into and out of the furnace, in just enough of a regular interval to sound…like it was breathing and alive. That was weird.







Natural death scene in a house; unattended. Woman dead in her living room. Police are called. Investigate. Nothing suspicious, just an old dead woman with a lot of health problems. She had been leaning over the living room couch to adjust the curtains and she at that moment had her final cardiac arrest issue. Keeled over head first and died upside down, wedged between the couch and wall. When we peeled her face off the wall, a bunch of rotten skin and hair was left stuck on the wall. Yeah. That was kind of gross. Why am I sharing this? For the same reason you're reading it.

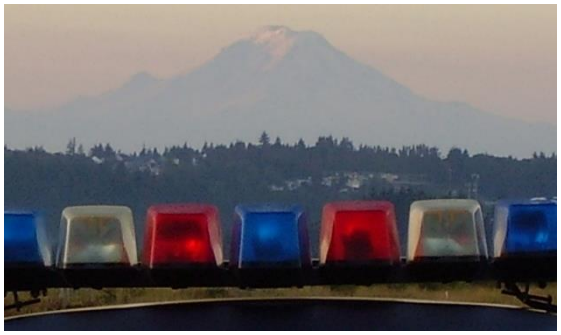






I caught a motorist throwing a cigarette out his window. When I asked him how often he did that he said never. I noted a lot of cigarette packs in his car – definitely a heavy smoker. I asked to see his ashtray. He was using it to hold a soft drink; it looked like it had not met a cigarette in years. Meaning that was not the first cigarette he'd discarded from his car. Meaning he was a liar. So....hells yeah I wrote him a big ticket for littering.





Suicidal woman tried to kill herself. First she sliced her arms and wrists up with razor blades but that didn't really work so she opened the very small window above her kitchen sink and crawled out of it. She fell straight down from her 4th floor apartment where a large bush slowed her down and deflected her onto some very large retaining wall boulders, causing quite a bit of apparent damage to her head. Didn't kill her though. Aid crew scooped her up and flew her off to the nearest level 1 trauma care hospital in Seattle. I don't know what happened to her after that; did she die? Did she live, but with massive permanent brain damage? Again, I have no idea. If I knew what happened to every person I met like that I'd probably have too much on my mind these days so early on in my career I learned to stop caring too much once the patients were removed from the scene. But if I were a betting man, I'd say she most likely died.



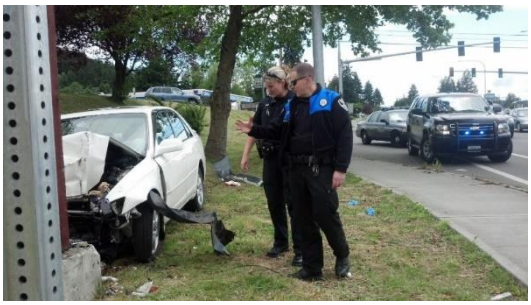


Road rage victim; got his ass beat one night by some random guy who didn't like his driving and followed him home. Suspect got away; witness reported he looked like a sailor from the navy base, who kept shrugging off his little Filipina girlfriend or wife. The victim got his ass handed to him; saved only because a witness yelled out to the suspect that the police were being called.



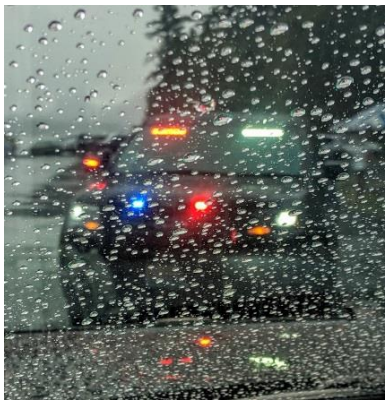


Crazy lady is absolutely convinced there is an active meth lab going on in the apartment below hers'. She said the machinery noises and fumes at night are so deadly that she has to sleep in her car in the parking lot. And she's gone to see several different medical doctors. It was of course all in her head. There was no meth lab. But the sleeping in her car part was real, as was the trips to doctors to get relief. That was unfortunately real. Of course she got really mad at me when I told her that after checking out the apartment below her and finding no meth labs, that perhaps she was having a delusion of some sort?





I got dispatched to a DOA – that's a "dead on arrival" call. I went to the apartment, thinking it was a typical old person dead in their bed or recliner situation. No. The fire department lieutenant at the door quickly briefed me: "Nick it looks like we got a heroin or fentanyl overdose scene here; one dead in the hallway. One unconcsious in the back bedroom- we're working on trying to revive her right now. Another unresponsive one on the couch we're working on her too, and another half-conscious one on the couch. All in their early-20's, we've got several more aid crews and medic units enroute." Shit! This is the exact opposite of routine. I go in. Sure enough, two victims completely unconscious, and one in zombie mode, oblivious to the scene. Those three left in ambulances. The dead girl in the hallway that we had to step over stayed behind for a few more hours while the crime scene techs processed the apartment. That was a bad scene that really affected me for a few weeks afterward. The cause of that mess: cocaine cut with fentynyl, and not mixed up well enough. Meaning those poor kids snorted way too much fentynyl instead of just cocaine. The survivors spent a very, very long time in the hospital trying to get their kidneys and livers back online.

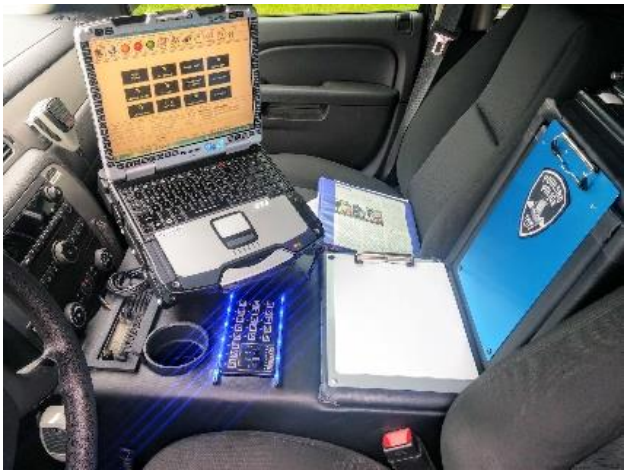






I pulled over a driver once because she had not been wearing her seat belt. She was a very, very large woman. She explained "Officer, I have a bad headache so I had to take off my seat belt to get my bra off." I of course had some questions, because I'm a naturally curious kind of guy. But let the record show that I did NOT ask any of those questions. I was actually kind of speechless. In, fact I let her go. Quickly. Because I had a personal policy that if somebody has a really, really unique and/or creative excuse that I'd never heard before, then they wouldn't get a ticket from me. I had never heard the old headache/bra/seatbelt excuse one before..or since.





Crime scene/burglary at a Thai restaurant, it's after hours and closed but we find a door open. I'm there with the fire marshal because the fire alarm had gone off, too. We're in the kitchen, kind of aghast at the bowls of rice that are left out, ready for the next morning. "I didn't know you could just leave rice out in the open like that..uncovered?" I said to the fire marshal. H agreed: "Yeah, uh, you can't. I mean you can, I guess, but you really shouldn't..especially in a commercial public kitchen." Well. I didn't eat there, so that one didn't bother me as much as the salsa chips being left out all weekend uncovered in the Mexican restaurant. As a cop, I saw too many restaurant kitchens after hours that I wish I had not seen.





I got dispatched to a residential burglary. As I finished the investigation, I see an aid car and fire truck pull into the driveway right next door and the crews go running into the house with their medic gear. I walk over there and see they're trying to revive a woman in her 50's who had just literally dropped dead while visiting her friends there. She was DRT – Dead Right There. I was kind of mad that the dispatchers hadn't noticed I was literally one house away; they could have let me know when the 911 call came in and I would have been in the house about 4 minutes before the aid crew arrived. Another example of how dispatching is still not exactly a science yet and is definitely not perfect – if you think your local 911 center never makes mistakes...think again.



I pulled over a guy for not wearing his seat belt. He didn't forget to put it on; he quite intentionally was not wearing it. Because you know, the nanny state can't tell him how to live his life. I mean, seatbelts are a great thing but he can be exempt if he chooses to, that's his choice, he doesn't have to follow that damn law, and his first words to me, when I told him that I had stopped him for not buckling up: "I didn't know city cops could enforce that law." He said it in the tone of "why I believe you are overstepping your authority here officer." Now, in case you dropped out of the same elementary school that this guy did and your educational level about the law is the same, lemme assure you that yes, city cops can enforce any and all state traffic laws. That's why cops are sometimes called "law enforcement officers", you know?







Some kind of a verbal dispute in a parking lot went down; two strangers had got into an argument and the police were called. One guy left the scene just prior to our arrival. Still there is the other guy and his wife. The wife explained to the other officer and myself what had happened, but we were quite distracted by her husband who kept trying to take up a tactical stance behind us, body offset and angled, causing us some mild alarm; we had to keep directing him to just stand in front of us like a normal person. Wife explained to us that he used to be a police officer and can't help himself. "You're doing it again!" she yelled at him trying to get him out of cop mode. She said he had been a cop for 8 years. The way she phrased it made me suspect he had been fired. Probably because he was a dick. As evidenced by him tactically squaring off against us; he should have godamn well known that was completely unecessary and would cause us significant concern.





Dark and cold December morning. A distraught woman is sitting in my patrol car in the passenger seat. She had just, quite unintentionally, run over a pedestrian and killed her. The pedestrian had darted out into traffic; with her hoody up over her head so she either didn't see the car coming at her or she had thought the driver would see her and stop. She was wrong on both counts. It was clearly not the driver's fault, which I kept telling her as she was crying and shaking.





A crazy guy is out in his front yard hollering and yelling; he's in full-on schizophrenic mode, complete with delusions and paranoia. Several officers are present trying to calm him down, and more are on the way. I'm watching from across the street when suddenly an even more dramatic event goes down behind me: a gentleman in his back yard had fired up his table saw, I think in an attempt to stop hearing the crazy neighbor ranting. Guy is cutting old boards with the table saw in the back yard when it kicks back and yanks his hand into the blade. I run over to him when he staggers out front holding his gloved hand; he tells me that the saw got him. I see very little blood so I tell him to hold it tight, and I call an aid car. Once inside the aid car, they peel the glove off and we all see he's surprisingly completely missing two fingers. Before the aid car leaves for the hospital I run back to house, suddenly a contestant in the old Find the Fingers game. I found a finger on the ground near the saw, kind of camouflaged amid the autumn leaves and sawdust. I bagged it and ran it back to him. Couldn't find the pinky finger though; I think it had got obliterated in the saw blade and disintegrated into a red mist. I felt pretty good about finding one of the fingers though; the aid crew was, I think, just going to leave without it.





I pulled a guy over for speeding. He explained to me that he had to go the bathroom. Like really badly. A moment later he said: "Ah... I just shit my pants!" I did not stick around long enough for the smell to hit me; I did a catch and release and let him go immediately. I believe that if you ever want to get out of a possible ticket, just tell the officer that you shit your pants.





Some transient criminals were living out in the woods in tents. Myself and another officer were having too much fun at their camp while they were gone, probably out shoplifting again. "Say, this stretched out rope holding up this tarp up is right at throat level! What if somebody walks into this in the middle of the night?" The other officer already had his knife out. "Yes. Choking hazard. I can fix this." Then I point to the lines staking the tents out. "Oh those are tripping hazards," the other officer announced. "I have a duty to mitigate that.." and we ripped them out and maybe threw them into the woods. Also that hatchet they had left there, that might have been really hard for them to find when they got back, too.





A citizen walked up to me while I was parked near an intersection, watching for traffic violations. “Officer, I have a big problem with that stop sign over there,” he said, pointing to the red stop sign across the street. “It has a square Do Not Enter sign mounted on the post on the back side of it, and so now it looks like a big square, and not the regulation 8 sided stop sign it’s supposed to be.” I looked at him blankly, but with eyebrows raised, wondering if he was serious. “It’s not DOT compliant! That’s a federal law!” Oh dear, he was serious. I directed him to go march on city hall and complain to the traffic engineering department; perhaps somebody there might care.







Me, confronting an old man in an old-folks’ home. He tried to shoo me away with his cane but I was there on very official business and I had to talk to the old guy about him criminally harassing his neighbors. When he put his cane up in front of him I grabbed onto it and found he was a very surprisingly strong old guy and we spent a very long moment locked in a struggle with the cane between us; we each had both of our hands on it. The whole time I kept thinking I could end it all effectively with a simple foot sweep, but it would have probably broken his pelvis and clavicle and back and ribs so that was out of the question.



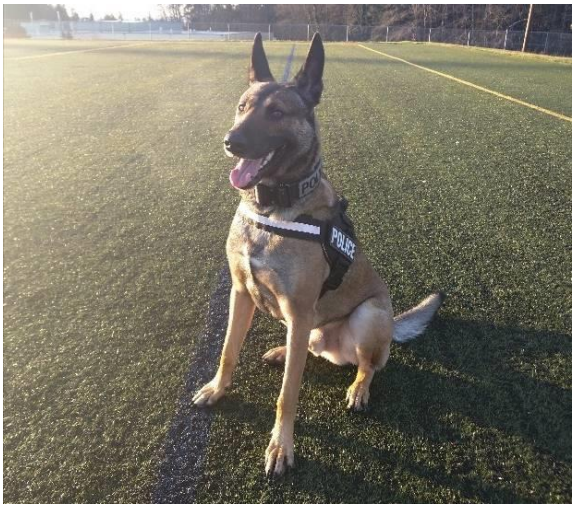




Two neighbors were mad at each other. One of them won’t return the balls over the fence that the neighbor kids keep accidentally lobbing over. The police are called. That’s me. Because the balls aren’t being thrown back over the fence. The guy who is the ball owner says “Oh you know what, I think I know what the problem is. That gal,” he said - pointing to the neighbors house – “..her husband is in the Navy. Poor guy is always gone on deployments. Recently when he came back home I took him aside and told him that since I was a navy guy myself once, he might appreciate knowing about how when he’s gone, his wife is entertaining other guys a lot at her house.” Me, staring at the dude, trying not to look aghast. “I guess he had a talk with his wife and now she’s pissed at me.”







The time I followed a patrol K9 unit on a fresh track, late one warm summer night, looking for a burglar. The dog led us to a front porch where some kids – 6th graders - were having an overnight sleepover. All hell broke loose in the still of the night when the dog starting chewing on one of the kids. I was horrified; of the several kids present, the dog had quickly sniffed them all and then decided to start biting the one black kid present. The parents and neighbors woke up to the all the barking and the cops yelling and the kids hollering and it turned out that the dog was right on; that one black kid had been the burglar. He had just come back and was settling into his sleeping bag and surprise! Police dog in your face! The K9 handler and I were horrified at first but when the kid confessed we felt a lot better about the outcome.





The low-income apartment renter who moved out suddenly and left behind such a mess it required workers in biohazard suits to clean it up. Her $900 rent had been subsidized by the government; her share was only $63 a month. Shortly after that the entire apartment complex ended their government contract to provide low-income housing; all of the units were remodeled and upgraded, the low-income folks were made to leave, and new renters who were capable and willing to pay around $1,500 a month for one bedroom apartments moved in. A lot of people cried about how tragic it was that the low-income folks got forced out. I was not one of them; I was quite glad to see all those people leave. Because guess how many police calls we got to that place after the place got cleaned up? NONE! None more calls requiring police intervention!





Hit and run in a parking lot. A very large Ford Excursion pulled out of a parking spot too sharp and smeared into the car parked adjacent. The driver of the Ford never felt the impact and so she kept driving, oblivious to the damage she had caused. A witness recorded her license plate and I tracked down the driver at her place of business. She could not believe she had hit and car and not felt it; she willingly came back to the scene. So it was not an intentional hit and run; I just made sure she gave her insurance information to the owner of the smushed car. Which happened to be a still-new bright red super nice Corvette. The carbon-fiber front didn't have enough resistance or make enough noise to attract the attention of the Ford driver, but it sustained major front end damage. The owner of the 'vette was an older guy who was trying really hard not to cry – I could see his eyes kept welling up. He explained he took the car the racetrack regularly and it was currently the fastest recorded Corvette in the entire state; a certified first place record holder. He entered it in car shows and had another big one coming up in a week. We agreed it was going to take more than a week to replace the front end. Poor guy.







A drug dealer got arrested for drug dealing. Finds himself in jail. Calls his wife, tells her to get rid of that bedroom safe with the you-know-what in it. Too bad for him, the police were monitoring his jail phone calls. A search warrant is applied for, and a judge signs off on it. Officers take the warrant to the house to look for the safe. Narcotics detection K9 officer (that's me!) also is there, with the dog. Dog sniffs the hell out of the place but the safe, with the whatever you-know-what, had already been removed. Sigh..You win some, you lose some.







A young man living by himself in his apartment called 911 after an accident. I got there first and saw blood just everywhere. He was in shock and explained he had tripped over his stupid ankle biter dog and fell into the very large window in the living room; his hand went through the glass and concurrently, the broken glass went through his hand, gashing it open and producing a wound that was pouring out blood just everywhere. The EMT's arrived and took him to the hospital. Poor kid did not have any medical insurance.





The scourge of drugs and addiction was an equal opportunity destroyer, I firsthand saw it afflict families with no class distinction or discrimination. City council member's kids involved with drugs? Yes. A police chief's son involved with drugs? Yes. A superior court judge's son involved with drugs? Yes. A mayor's son? Yes. A school principal? Yep. Firefighters? Yep. Police Officers? Yep.

More than a few times in my career I got dispatched to reports of cars being stolen, when the actual case was that the owners of the cars got drunk, crashed their cars, and then the next morning they tried to say somebody else did it. Sometimes we found the crashed cars before they called, and sometimes they called afterward. Or sometimes we'd find the crashed cars in a ditch, call the owners, and they'd pretend like they had no idea what had happened. Pro Life Tip: If you ever crash your car, leave the scene, and think you can convince the cops that it wasn't you who was involved, must have been somebody else, officer…you'd be making a really bad decision to try that.





There I am in my patrol car, parked alongside the highway watching for traffic violators. A black car zipping by in heavy traffic catches my eye; I turn to look and follow it and I become alarmed to see that the driver, having obviously spotted me, stomped on the gas and accelerated quickly to put time and distance between us with no effort at discretion. I pull out into traffic and I see the black car up ahead of me turn off onto a side street so fast he's just about drifting sideways, leaving tire marks in the road, kicking up dirt and almost hitting at least one other car in the intersection. I speed up, hit my lights and siren, and the chase is on. I catch up to him and see him dart up a side road; he's still got a good lead on me but I'm closing in. A couple blocks later I catch a glimpse of him going into an apartment complex and I get my chance; he probably didn't know that road looped out into another entrance/exit – I speed over to the second way in and out, zoom into the complex, and wait for him to come out. A couple seconds later he turns the corner in the parking lot and we're face to face. He stopped for the briefest moment, and then accelerated toward me, from about 50 feet away. He found a gap between my patrol and some parked cars; for better or worse I had left just enough room for him to squeak by me. The other officers later told me that I had sounded quite excited on the police radio at that moment. Because I thought for sure he was going to scrape the shit out of the drivers side of my patrol car. In fact, after he drove past me and got away, I had to get out and look at my car; it actually was unscathed. I could not believe that he had missed me. He couldn't have missed my side by more than a couple inches. Twenty seconds later the other two officers on duty found his flight path and they started chasing him but he got away from them, too.





Residential structure fire, fully involved! I was in the area on patrol when the call came out so I beat the fire department there by a few minutes. I will never forget running up the front door (wide open) and staring in wonderment at the inside of the house; the stairwell almost directly in line with the front door revealed the entire second floor was totally engulfed in orange roaring roiling flames. It was like looking into a giant woodstove that was set on high. I backed out to the front yard and found the owner of the house who was of course freaking out, saying she needed to get some things out of the house. I directed her instead to move her car out of the driveway to save it, and get it out of the way of the fire trucks that were coming. She moved her car and a minute later the firefighters showed up. I briefed them, and then realized that the woman was MIA. And realized that she might have gone back into the house when I wasn't looking. The firefighters grew quite alarmed and started putting on their SCBA's and gear. About 30 seconds later we discovered the woman was actually next door, being consoled by her neighbor, so we all cancelled our panic mode and the firefighters went back to getting the hoses out.

One day a driver honked her horn at me in a rather rude and aggressive manner. She felt like I should not have swerved into her oncoming lane a little bit to go around some parked cars. There was more than plenty of room for us to pass each other but she, at that moment in time, felt like not moving over at all, like the whole lane was her birthright or something and she didn't have to share any of the road. She hadn't noticed I was in a police car, which is why she honked at me. And I immediately realized that I had an opportunity that I just HAD to take, on behalf of and for all you people out there who ever had a rude driver honk at you quite unnecessarily; I could actually do something about that. In my case, it involved turning on all my police lights, doing a hard U turn to get behind her, and have a little chat about just sharing the road and not being a bitch to other drivers. She was extremely apologetic so no ticket was issued; I just really relished that delicious little "OH NO YOU DINT!" moment.





One morning I find myself ruefully staring up at firefighter with a hose, at the end of a large ladder fire truck raised above the wet smoking ruins of a favorite restaurant that had caught fire in the middle of the night. That was in 2006 and I'm still mad at the restaurant owners for not having a fire alarm in there; 30 employees lost their jobs when that place burned down. The whole scene was a little awkward and professionally embarrassing for the fire department because, uh.. their main station was less than 500 feet away and they weren't able to save it.



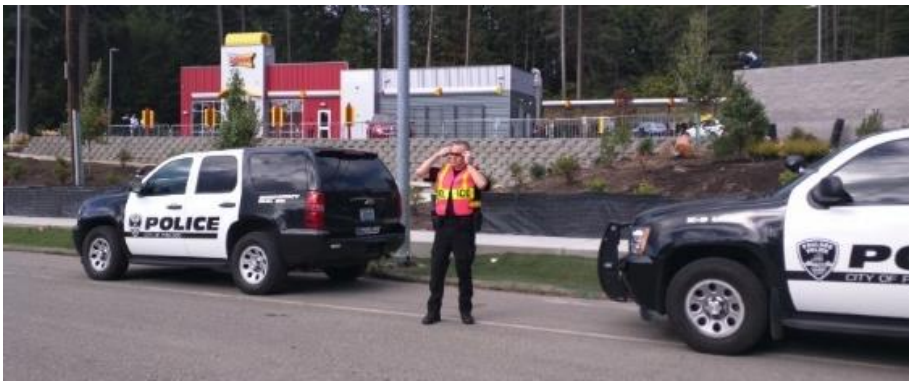


Some gal in town was a co-host on some weird internet podcast, I can't even remember what it was I just remember they talked about weird things and conspiracy theories and catered to a fringe demographic out there on the interwebs, so it was no surprise (to me) at all when a local creep decided to fixate on her, hard core. He decided to become a full-time professional stalker, which of course freaked out his victim. She had to get a court order filed against him when his messages to her got super creepy.





Me, working at an off duty job in the evening. The local movie theatre is showing the presidential debates live on a big screen. For free! A small crowd has shown up to take them up on their offer and I'm there because this is Donald J. Trump v Hillary Rodham Clinton and Tensions. Are. High. The movie theatre management had decided it would be prudent to have a uniformed officer at the door as a polite reminder for audience members to remain civil. So I got paid to watch the debates. And the audience members behaved themselves; they were all anti-Trump so there were no outbursts or threats of violence.





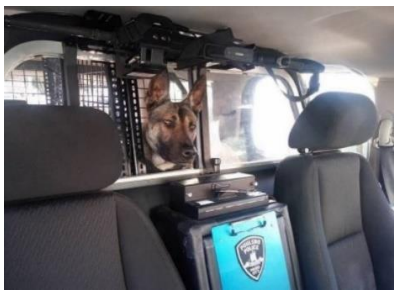
I pulled over a young submarine sailor once for speeding. He didn't like me at all and I didn't like him; it was pretty much an instant personality conflict. He had a really, really bad attitude and it showed. But I let him go without an expensive ticket, on the condition that I got a phone call from his superviser a couple levels up – the chief of the boat. I let the sailor go and guess who never told the COB that he needed to call the police to talk about a sailor with a bad attitude? Maybe that sailor thought I'd forgot all about it, or wouldn't know how to contact the COB myself. Two minutes after I picked up the phone, the submarine's Chief of the Boat was on the line. He told me "No, he didn't report to me that I should call you, but I'm not surprised. We've been having problems with this kid lately. Don't worry officer, we'll take care of this."





I got called to a house for some kind of problem; this was a long time ago when we had a housing development that had been built as civilian contractor housing during WWII; fifty years later the neighborhood was old, low income, run down and ghetto, and called "The Projects." The problem there that day was Ed, one of our frequent fliers, who had cut his hand open on glass and needed an ambulance. The only reason why I remember this is that Ed, in an attempt to get the blood off his hand that was veritably gushing out, started the old shake-your-hand-and-fling-blood everywhere technique, with no regard for the nice police officer standing in front of him.







Old lady lived in a house at the corner of a busy intersection. Kept getting mad at the local pizza delivery driver kid because the pizza place was like two blocks away and he drove past her house at least three times an hour with his car radio too loud. One day while I was outside her house directing traffic during a bicycle race, she walked over to me and complained about him again and just then the kid drove by. I immediately stopped him, asked him to please turn down his radio, explained the old lady situation, and he agreed and turned it down and continued on his way. I was feeling pretty satisfied that I was able to address her problem literally seconds after she reported it to me. Later, the on-duty sergeant told me that she had called to complain about me right after that; she was very disappointed that I had not arrested the kid or at least given him a ticket.

The elementary school principal I pulled over for not wearing her seatbelt. She explained to me how she had once rear ended a truck carrying long pipes, the pipes went into her windshield and speared the driver's seat but she didn't die that time because she had not been wearing a seat belt and so she had been able to quickly duck out of the way. So...she vowed to never wear a seat belt ever. Cause, you know..pipes. Again, this was a school principal telling me that.

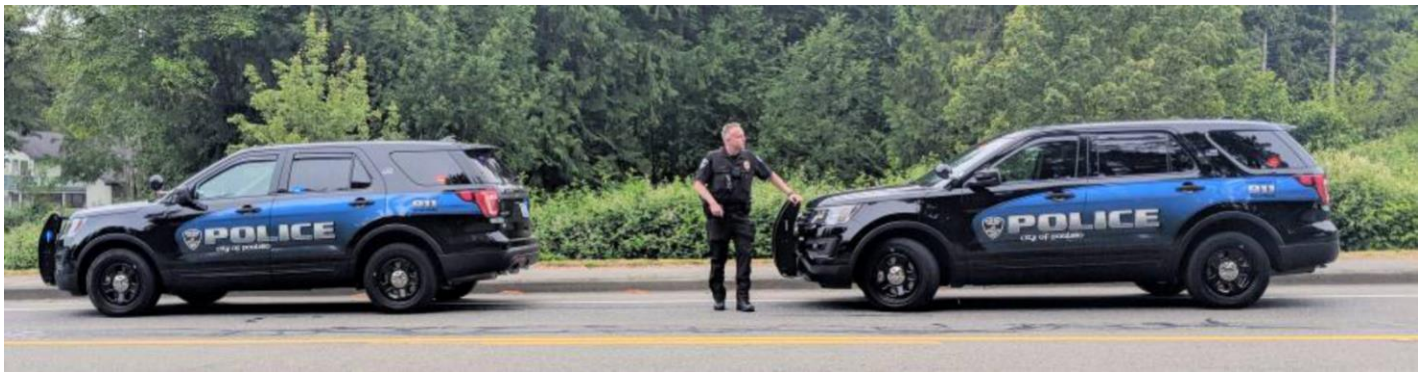


Me: knocking on a front door, peering in a side window looking for somebody to answer. Nobody is home. Then the homeowner drives up, she's a middle aged woman. "This is my house..is everything okay?" she asked, noticing then that there were several undercover/detective police cars also parked nearby in front of her house. A detective approached her and explained a search warrant had been issued to scour her son's computer to get the child porn. She let us in the house and few minutes later the 20-something year son arrived. He was questioned, and confessed within a few minutes.





The slightly drunk woman in a very crowded bar who impulsively grabbed an officer's ass as he walked by in the crowd. He was not amused and she got handcuffed. To her defense, the officer grabbed was not a bad looking young guy. For the record, I would not handcuff a woman for that. He was kind of a tight ass officer though. Which was probably why she grabbed it.



Here are some police-seized and impounded cars, awaiting search warrants on the probable cause that they each had illegal drugs in them:





To maintain and prove the integrity of the cars' contents, we'd seal them in there with a lot of evidence tape. That way we could attest that nothing had been planted in it and nothing had been removed. We had special evidence tape that was tamper proof. Meaning it would not peel off intact. Once it was applied, it would come off only in very small pieces; it was completely impossible to remove it in less than a hundred little scrapes. If a window was broken or could not be secured; the whole window part would be covered and sealed, like this:





Now I know what you're thinking. You're going to say something about how that sure seems like a lot of tape that's going to be stuck on those cars forever, or at the very least take hours and hours to painstakingly clean off. I will try to assure you that this was not overzealousness on the part of the police, but it was totally necessary to keep the integrity of the vehicles intact until it was official searching time.





How many times did I pull over a car that had old remnants of police evidence tape still stuck on it? More than a few. Did those cars and drivers get extra special attention from me? Uh, yeah..

Me, interviewing a high school girl in the police department interview room. She tearfully tells me that she had got drunk at a party, passed out, and woke up with a penis in her mouth.





Emergency dispatcher reported a motor vehicle collision, with injury. Specifically, the report was that there was "entrapment" and "trauma to the head" so I turned on all my lights and hit the siren and responded to the scene at Mach 1. I get there and find only a very minor fender bender with no blood or guts. What had happened was an old lady driving her sedan had bumped into the car in front of her and there was just enough torqueing of the car's frame that she could not open her door anymore. So the 911 caller reported to the 911 call receiver that "she can't get out of her car" and somewhere between the call receiver typing the notes into the dispatch system and the 911 dispatcher reading the notes, it got translated into "entrapment." And the "trauma to the head" was a result of the old lady, when asked if she was okay, reported a mild headache, which was relayed to 911 by the witness/caller as a head injury. Another great CenCom dispatch job!





Me, looking for somebody in an apartment complex. I'm on foot walking behind the apartment complex. Come around a corner and surprised the hell out of some old lady on her back porch; I was less than 10 feet away from her and she was certainly not expecting to see a police officer there. She looked like she wanted to die from embarrassment because she was still her morning bathrobe, and had a lit-bowl of marijuana in her hand. I just smiled and apologized for disturbing her.





"Sure is quiet this morning" I said out loud one day on a very quiet boring shift. That caused my coworker to immediately start swearing and cursing at me for jinxing everything. Sure enough, literally less than 30 seconds later, dispatch calls to us a report of a man with a gun threatening people. We took care of it, and my coworker spent the next several days swearing at me for saying the Q word out loud and ruining our calm shift.

Neighbors of old lady get concerned because nobody has seen her for a few days. So the police get called and I have to go in and find her dead in her house. Actually, she was not dead. She was not even home; she was simply out of town visiting a sister. I remember this otherwise unmemorable event because the old gal was a hoarder. Her specialty was clothing. Women's clothing, new, never worn….everywhere in the house. Stacked in piles on the counters, chairs, floors; everywhere. Clothes on racks set up in all the rooms, and even the hallways. And every article of clothing…still had tags on it. Tens of thousands of dollars' worth.





A sheriff's deputy pulled over a car; a simple stop for speeding I think. The driver didn't want to talk to the deputy and jumped out and went into cross country mode on foot. I went to the area to help find him; we got him a quarter mile away. He was wearing a white t shirt and after going through several acres of blackberry bushes his shirt was more purple that white. And his bare arms were purple and bloody red from the thorns too. It was just awesome.





Two burglars broke into a church one night. Found their way to the kitchen where they made macaroni and cheese, and then baked some brownies. Nothing else taken; just the mac n cheese and brownies. Aside from the messy kitchen they made a clean getaway.





Business owner calls 911 to report a burglar has broken into his office. I show up and see why he's all upset; some criminal has cut a hole in the wall from the outside and made into the office, next to the safe. Obviously an inside job, since the burglar's hole was in a perfect spot between the studs, very close to the safe.

Back in the days when we had to hand-write traffic tickets on small triplicate forms I could scratch one out in about 6 minutes. When we upgraded to bar code scanning/typing/printing on our mobile computer terminals, I could do one in less than 2.





Me, in a contractor's garage, where about $10,000 dollars' worth of power tools had been stolen. Me, getting distracted by the very large painting on the wall showing the backside of a naked man, reaching up into the sky. Naked guy looked a lot like the contractor. Like me, you have questions now. Unfortunately, I did not ask those questions, so this story ends here.





One night an alarm company reported an alarm activation at a big vehicle service center/tire store. I responded and the other night shift officer got there first, found an open door, and starting poking around inside to look for burglars. None were found, but I did get his heart rate going a bit when I showed up a minute later on the other end of the building and saw him creeping around in the dark. From a hidden position I got my taser out and switched it to the ON/STANDBY/READY mode, which meant the red laser sighting dot came on. And I put that dot on the wall by the officer, a good 100 feet away. He never saw me but he sure saw that laser dot in the dark and it took a few heart pounding hilarious seconds for him to realize it was me messing with him.







There I am in a bar; a crime has occurred and I got called. It's after-hours, which for a bar in this case is about 9 am on a Sunday. The manager is upset about a burglary but I'm kind of distracted and transfixed and focused on the open bins of ice cubes that the bartenders used to scoop for the drinks. Because the bins had no covers on them. Apparently everybody there was okay with the ice being uncovered 24/7, within breathing of (and breathing-on) distance from the bar patrons. But I was there because a burglar had snuck in during the night and used some power tools to cut open the small cash machine in the bar; the thief knew exactly where to attack it; it was cut open pretty much right where the cash drawer holder thing was. It was not the first cash machine I'd seen that had been violated. But the ice…that was a new one for me.

Office prank time: When we moved from our old police station to the new one in the city hall, each officer got a file drawer in a cabinet to put stuff in. Well actually we didn't get our own drawer each though, we had to share with another officer to save space. So we had "drawer buddies." Dave's drawer was shared with Valerie. I don't know how I thought this up but it occurred to me that if I threw the occasional odd items into their drawer, Valerie would presume it belonged to Dave, and Dave would think it belonged to Valerie. Which is exactly what happened. I found all kinds of fun random things at thrift stores, and put them in there at the rate of about one thing a week. Things like old random textbooks, random fiction books including romance novels, an old camera, and a mess of random cords and remote controls. Their drawer slowly accumulated a ton of wtf items. After a very long 7 months (!) the drawer was eventually packed completely to the top with about 40 pounds of crap and Dave finally wrote a note to Valerie complaining about how she was hogging the whole damn drawer and could she please get some of her shit out of there. At which point they both realized then that all of that shit in there belonged to neither of them. When they emptied out their drawer all the crap in there filled three whole full sized paper grocery bags. It was just glorious.





Me, in a dead woman's apartment. She's still there, quite dead. Naked. Freshly dried poop smeared all over the walls. Looks like she died with extreme distress; her last minute or two must have been complete shitty panic and disorientation. What a terrible way to go.







Me in a living room; the mother has called to report her missing teenage daughter had come back home after an argument the night before. Mother pointed to me and yelled at her daughter "See! I told you'd I call the cops! Now you can make a choice, enlist in the army or go to jail!" Wow, I thought, this is awesome. I like this! Yeah, let's get a recruiter on the phone. Oh, wait, that's right this girl is a heavy dope smoker. No way will she qualify for the armed forces. As I reminded them of that, the cuffs came out and off to the jail we went.



Although my chosen profession was in public safety, I still found occasions when I could channel my artistic creativity. For example, in the mid '90's I applied for a special state traffic safety grant; my idea was to make 9 custom-designed street signs encouraging folks to wear their seat belts. The $500 grant was awarded, the special signs were made, and public works put them on posts in 9 strategic locations where I directed them to. Twenty-five years later, five of the signs were still up and a couple had even had their posts upgraded from wood to metal; they look like they're going to be up for quite a while longer. I'd say the state got their money's worth from that expenditure.











Over the years I also designed three different challenge coins for the PD; the first one was in 2014. They were minted in batches of 200 or 300 and I sold them to my coworkers at cost. Two versions were metal and one was porcelain, like a poker chip:



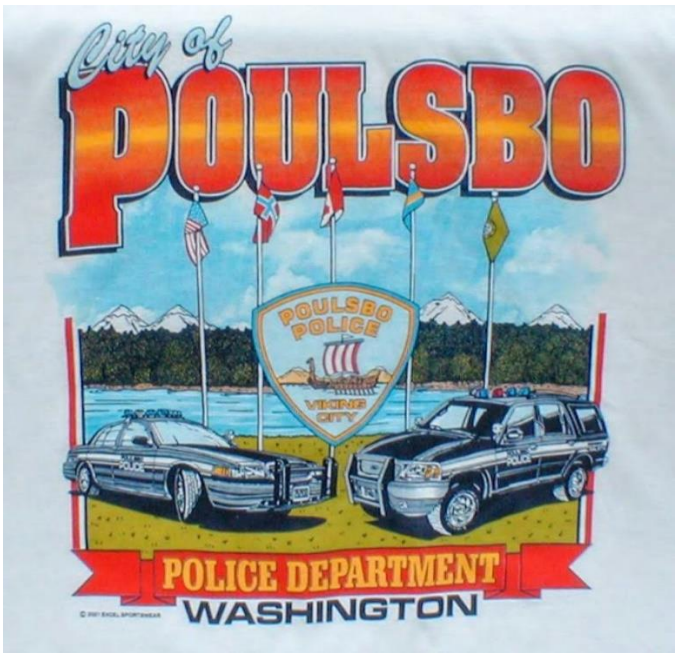


Here's a multi-agency logo I designed; it wound up on t-shirts and mousepads:



And over the years I designed some other t-shirts. Of course the folks at the t-shirt factory did the actual designing, I just did the rough layouts and colors and fonts and proportions. Two of them looked like this:





And below: A large card-stock poster I had made for local community distribution. I was (kind of) surprised to see it in a random doctor's office, 20 years later, right above the scale when my second son was there getting weighed in. As a teenager. Also, the copy I gave to the local DOL office was still on their bulletin board almost 25 years later; still amazingly present when both my sons got their instruction permits and then drivers licenses there.



Old man dying of cancer tripped over a curb outside his medical clinic, flew into a rage, and came back with spray paint. I got called. After seeing what he did, I agreed that while his reaction was a bit unorthodox, his heart was in the right place. See below.











Old guy speeding in a truck on the state route, heading toward my jurisdiction. He used to be a pipefitter until he got blown backward in a steam explosion, hit his head badly, got a traumatic brain injury, and got disabled. (I learned that part later) Now he's speeding in a truck, 15 years after the injury, because suddenly out of the blue with no warning at all he's had a major psychotic break, is freaking out, hollering nonsense, grabs his keys and goes to the truck. His adult daughter tries to stop him from leaving the house but the best she could do is jump into the back of the pickup truck and she's on the phone to 911, calling out the roads he is passing. He doesn't care she's hanging on for dear life in the bed of the truck because he's on a mission. I'm the first officer closest to them; I drive into an intercept position at an intersection and stop traffic so he doesn't get out onto the main highway. We tell the 911 dispatcher to tell the daughter to jump out of the truck if she gets the chance. I get out of my patrol vehicle and start quickly walking back past all the cars I'm blocking with all my lights on, looking for the truck. Right as I identify it the old guy swerves around me and continues on. I can see the woman in the back, crying and yelling into her phone; she can't bail out cause dad won't stop. I run back to my vehicle, and another arriving sheriff's deputy and I give chase with lights and sirens and the old guy decides to be cooperative and suddenly pull over. His daughter jumps out of the back of the truck bed, hysterical. We get the old guy out of the truck. Several more cops catch up to us with lights and sirens. Then things start to get interesting; the old guy tells us about his reality, which is that he used to be a special forces operator and he's been called out of military retirement to catch some terrorists that have been secretly killing people in this county and now we're blowing his cover there by the side of the road and endangering his family and he needs to get to the landing zone to get picked up by the Blackhawk helicopter to go meet the other special forces teams and he can't give us any specifics because it's all very very classified. Uh.....Okaaaaayyyy. He went to the hospital for a mental evaluation. Tearful daughter told us that he had never actually been in the military. Never ever. Just one good brain injury that messed him up in the head. I later decided that if I ever go crazy, that's the kind of way I want to be. Not like paranoid that the CIA is watching me with cameras everywhere and poisoning my food and spying on me and I have to make aluminum foil hats..no, that's no fun at all. I want a delusion of grandeur. That I'm a secret agent and I need to go on a mission and kill the terrorists and I'm late for my helicopter pick up to take me to my space plane so I can go check in with the commander at the secret moon base – that kind of crazy, you know?





How many times, during my career, did I talk to citizens who reported that their cars had been prowled during the night..while parked in their driveway? Dozens and dozens. I'd always ask if they had a garage door opener remote in their car, and was it still there? If it had been taken, then that was what you would call Not a Good Sign. Time to unplug the garage door opener. I'd also ask if the windows were broken, or was entry gained because a car door or two had maybe been left unlocked? Literally 99% of the time, the answer was "Uh...I left my car unlocked." At which point my sympathy meter would drop by about half.





A shoplifter ran out of WalMart into the parking lot with three undercover loss prevention store associates in hot pursuit. I'm just around the corner in my police car, on the phone with them as I come into the area and I hit the lights and sirens and arrive where the action is. I pass the running store employees and close in on the fleeing suspect. A citizen in the parking lot, seeing what is happening, decides to help out and quickly realizes he is close enough to stick a foot out and trip the running suspect. He doesn't succeed, but he definitely slows down the bad guy who manages somehow to recover from an almost wipe out. But my siren freaks him out badly; he decides to stop running and he throws his hands up in the air in defeat. I jump out of my car and approach him on foot. "I'm an idiot!" he announces loudly to me. I guess as an apology? He then adds "I'm addicted to heroin!" Which is not news; most of the thieves caught there are heroin addicts. I yell at the guy to get down on the ground, since I have trust issues with him running from authority. He readily complies, even though it is raining and the pavement is completely wet. I question the guy about his motives and tactics, but do so while he's laying down in the rain, getting really, really wet. Oh but first I advise him of his Miranda Rights, which takes a little bit of time. Then I have to pat him down for weapons. I suppose I could have stood him up first, but my technique that day was to check his pockets while he was face down, then I rolled him over and checked his front pockets. After I handcuffed him, of course. Boy was he wet when I finally stood him up. Both front and back. We take him into the security office, he fully confesses, and the dollar amount of the theft was not enough to really warrant a booking into the jail so we decide to release him. We tell him to watch the mail for a court summons that the prosecutor will send to him for being a thief, and he understands. But before I let him go, I make him call his mommy. He's 26 years old but I feel this guys' parents need to be enlightened about what he's doing. He calls home and tearfully admits everything to his mother. There, now his humiliation is complete. Sounds cruel I know, but like I said sometimes it really helps these folks when relatives are informed about what kind of problems they have. Then he got banished from the WalMart. Forever. Actually all WalMarts everywhere, forever. So he walked off into the rain to get off the WalMart property while I watched. I hope it was a good learning experience for him.



I came across a crashed car in the woods once; the driver just had gone off the road not 30 seconds earlier. There was still dust in the air kicked up from his tires spinning off the road. The driver – who had neglected to use his seat belt- had gotten thrown out of the car through the drivers side open window and somehow managed to avoid getting run over or crushed or thrown into any trees as the car rolled and flipped. He was a little dazed but otherwise okay. He was one lucky bastard.



I once caught a guy stealing rocks.





Professional school bus driver, a really tall, big guy in his 60's – is at the front counter of the police department. Wants to talk to a police officer. I'm summoned. "How can I help you sir?" He tells me he had just been in an argument with his boss and during their disagreement his boss used his index finger to jab him in the chest, to emphasize his point. I can see where this is going, and my face is completely blank as the bus driver explains he wants to file a police report. Long pause. I was really hoping he'd feel better to just vent, but no, he wants the full meal deal. "So…you want me to start an investigation…for…an assault case." I reply. "Yes I do! That was unwanted physical contact and that's assault!" he said. Me, staring at him, with my best poker face, not even an eyebrow raised. Long pause. I can't quite believe it but he looks very serious and dead set on this course of action. "Alright," I said, thinking in my head that this was going to be my shortest ever written police report for an assault. And knowing that the prosecutor would most likely not want to waste even a minute of time to even think about actually filing a charge against boss man for poking his employee's chest with a finger. I did the report, talked to the other people involved, filed the case, don't know what the charging disposition was, don't care, still can't believe he made that big of a deal about it.







The popular middle school teacher – an affable retired Navy vet- who got accused of inappropriate conduct with a student. Police investigation led to a criminal court trial. He was publicly defended by dozens of present and former students. All of them were well-meaning, but naïve to the facts of the case which included a police record of similar grooming conduct with another student several years earlier. VERY damning. When I had interrogated the teacher his weak denials were also very damning: "Well if I did those things I'm accused of…that would be wrong." It was almost exactly like the Bob Costas interview with Jerry Sandusky. In an effort to prove his innocence, he brought along – of all people – the school district HR director to the police interview. Not a lawyer…the HR director. I said sure, why not. (The police chief at that time later admonished me for having a witness in the interview room but I'm still not sorry.) Note: inviting your HR guy to your police interrogation is NOT a good career move at all, BTW. The teacher was put on admin leave immediately and never went back to school after that. Then acquitted at criminal trial but found guilty in a civil case, with the school district paying out a huge amount of cash to the 8th grade victim. The teacher's wife was the manager at the bank where I went regularly for the next decade or so. I know she had read my police report and could probably read between the lines how I felt her husband was a liar and a super creepy pervert. So…that was always a little awkward to run into her at the bank. Also a classic case of super frustration, seeing that guy's honor defended by so many people who did not know a few simple facts of the case which would have completely changed their minds about him, had they known. The prior acts were ruled inadmissible in court though, so that's why the teacher was not found guilty. He had a good defense attorney.

Old guy lived on a boat moored dockside at the public port for 30 years. Got mad one day when one of the tires on his Jeep in the parking lot got chalked by a port employee. I guess one too many goddamn times. He confronted the port employees in their office and pulled out a handgun. Cause, you know, they put a chalk line on one of his tires. That was his last day of living there at the port.



I caught an assault suspect guy with a baseball bat. Then later in the week I caught another guy who had choked his girlfriend. About a day later I realized that in one week I had caught a Batman...and a Choker.





I dealt with a lot of scam victims (too many, really) who were defrauded out of their hard earned money. This short story is about the divorcee who gave her half of the divorce settlement -$50,000 dollars – to an unlicensed, unbonded, uninsured "general contractor" she had met at a friends' party after he mentioned he could build her a new house. She gave him all of her money up front, and then he left town without building her a house. "Please don't tell my ex-husband about this," the victim tearfully begged me. "He thinks I can't manage my finances!"





The time an old guy driving a classic Mustang brake-checked the tailgating kid behind him, who was also driving a Mustang. But a newer one. The kid behind him totally ran into the back of the old Mustang. Yep, it was a very preventable car accident. I happily wrote tickets to both of them; the guy in front got a ticket for stopping in the roadway for no good damn reason and the kid behind got a ticket for following too close. The best part was that I had been busy on another call and it took me like 10 minutes for me to arrive on the scene, giving those two idiots plenty of time to ruefully stare at each other and their crashed cars.



Guy had three young daughters. He was raping all of them. One night when one of them started bleeding and wouldn't stop, he had to call 911 for an ambulance. The angry 911 operator got the father to admit over the phone just exactly why his pre-teen daughter had a vaginal bleed at 1 am. Ambulance crew was dispatched, oh also the police too. I showed up at the house. (The other officer on duty was so excited about the call that he actually drove off the road at high speed responding to the house so it was just me there for that one..) Right away I handcuffed the guy and put him in the back of my car. I went back inside to check on the daughter. Aid crew guys show up in force and come into the living room to take care of the victim. At that moment the mom wanders into the living room half asleep in her nightgown, blinking a lot, sees us there and asks "What.. Is.. Going on...Here...?" And all of the aid crew guys look at me like it's my job to tell her. Which I did. Which caused her then to awaken fully. And freak the fuck out, you know, as one does. Dad the Rapist pled guilty and went off to prison for five whole years.



This one about the dying deer in a ditch: A car had hit it. Messed it up, but not dead yet. Flopping around and breathing frothy blood making a scene so I reluctantly got out my gun to dispatch it. One of the public works guys, on hand to eagerly claim it as venison, stepped in and offered to take care of the deer and save me a bullet (and a police report). I readily agreed and watched in mild horror he quickly stepped on the deer's nose with his big boot to hold it down, and then with a big knife he quickly NBD sawed the neck open to bleed it out while it weakly jerked its legs. Mission, uh, accomplished. Holy crap, man!



Another scam: There was the elderly Hispanic gentleman who got a call from his "grandson" in Mexico who needed money to repair a broken down car. So grandpa wired $1,000 from Western Union and guess what the next call was? "Grandpa, it's me Jose calling again," *(do this part in Mexican Spanish language though)* "..and that money was great but the car needs some more work, keep sending money!" And so another $900 went South and then grandpa's family found out what he was doing. I remember they met me outside the police station and showed me the Western Union receipts proving he sent money to Mexico. They kept showing me the papers like I was going to be able to actually do something. I was really tempted to point at the paper and pretend to get all excited. "Amigos! Yes, I know this man! Juan Del Madrigal in Jalisco!" (c'mon...really?) In my brief fantasy though I'd stop myself and announce "Oh, hang on...Nope, never mind. I was thinking of Jeffe. Not Juan. Sorry, outa luck!" Which is what I pretty much did tell them anyway. Because how in the world would I be able to track down the completely unknown and unidentified suspect in Mexico?!?





Then there was the Korean lady who ran a gas station with her husband. One day she got a phone call from 'The Electric Company" and was informed her payment was late and so the power was going to be shut off to her gas station/mini mart. She fell for it, completely. Freaked out. Told the caller that she was sure she had paid her latest bill, but if they didn't get it then she would absolutely send more money ASAP. This is where it gets interesting: the scammer had a complicated three-part set up going on, where part one was the guy calling to scare his victims. Part two was another call from the "electric company finance department" which would then set up a third call from the collection department. These guys must have been complete amateurs because when the victim asked how she could pay right away, the first guy was not ready to take her payment. She was literally begging to give a credit card number but that wasn't his department, he had to have the second guy call her. But between the first and second call, the victim's husband showed up at work, found out what was going on, and put a quick stop to it. He called the police and I showed up but of course there was nothing I could do, except marvel how close his wife had come to sending a chunk of their money away, but the scammer had been too stupid to take her money right away.





Another scam victim, an old lady, called 911 to report getting a phone call from a Computer Tech Support Place and without much effort she was convinced that her computer was broken and needed to be repaired (er..accessed) remotely by Mr. Helpful PC Repairman Guy. She got suspicious a day or so later and called the police. She reported that her computer was running really slow. My advice to her: "Uh...first thing you should do is just unplug your whole computer immediately!"

I listened to literally dozens of scam call victim complaints over the years; most were just questioning the validity of the calls they had got but some folks actually were conned out of money. I remember my first one was around 1995, when a local businessman called the police to report getting a fax from a Nigerian Prince who needed help to quietly move about $20,000,000 into the country. Then there was the girl who actually bought a car online from a completely made-up car dealership in another state (complete with a very real-looking website with cars for sales) and she had lost $7,000 dollars to the scammer. And there were the too-numerous-to-count folks who said the IRS had just called them, or the Federal Marshall's Office, or the Social Security Administration, or the local Sheriff's Department was coming to handcuff them. The aggravatingly sad thing is that all of these people, I know they must have seen all the consumer advocates on tv like at least several times a year telling them To Not To Give Yo Money To Strangers but then some of them went and did it anyway. Also I had to endure a lot of the victims insist that giving me the phone number of the suspects was the one vital clue that would completely solve the case. Guess what. Having a phone number of a scammer does not help for shit. Most of the numbers are good for only a week or so anywhere, most of them were in a completely different state, and a lot were not even in this country.





This next glorious scam started with a scammer in who knows what state, probably going down a list of small towns in America and he stopped his finger when he got to "Poulsbo, Washington, population 9,800." "Poulsbo?" I could hear him trying to pronounce it. "Poulsboro? What kind of a hick town is THAT? This sounds like my next target is what it sounds like." So he then called one of the smaller grocery stores in town. He totally lucked out when his phone call was answered by his ideal perfect dumb employee. In this case, a woman in her 40's who really should have known better. She should have stayed at the register and kept ringing up customers but I guess there was a lull in the action (it was a pretty small store) and so she picked up the phone and got into a conversation with "Agent Smith" calling from Western Union. His voice was persuasive and assured. "Hi this is Agent Smith, Western Union headquarters, ID number 4392LL Alpha and it's time for a critical but routine software upgrade of your money transfer terminal station there, I need you to go log in and prepare the system to receive standard and required upgrade codes blah blah blah.." and the stupid woman actually fell for it and logged in and entered the "proper codes to remotely audit the index file" and at "Agent Smith's" encouragement she somehow wound up hitting the "transfer/send" button a number of times, not realizing that every time she hit that she was in fact (and of course) having money from the store's reserve account sucked out and away into the void, out of the store and gone, because the beauty of Western Union is that electronic money leaves one location and can be picked up and cashed out at literally any other location, all one needs is the permission code to get the cash. "Agent Smith" was so smooth, he didn't even arouse any suspicion until a full week later when the store manager just about had a heart attack when he noticed the store's Western Union fund had been drained. Twelve thousand dollars was the amount that should have been there, and that was money owned by the store owner/manager, not Western Union. It was at that point they figured out what happened. The manager called the police, I showed up, and I realized that "Agent Smith" was obviously going to pick up his cash not all at once in a big store that had surveillance cameras, but here and there in small amounts leaving no name or face behind, again, in who-knows-what-state, probably though on the east coast. Or Midwest. Good job, Agent Smith. I was actually quite impressed with him. For five minutes' work, he made twelve grand, tax free. He'd only have to do that like once a month to make a pretty good living.







I caught and drove an old ex-con repeat-offender to jail once, I think he had a warrant or something simple and usual. He was so old – like late 60's old – that I had to cuff his hands in front of him because he couldn't bend his arms behind him. On the way to the jail, I had the back windows rolled down a bit for air. So it turns out he had a great opportunity to very easily reach into his front shirt pocket and remove that tiny little thin baggie of crystal methamphetamine and just toss it out the window. Even if I had seen him doing that, he would have totally gotten away with it. But no. He actually forgot all about that meth, and so when it was discovered in the jail intake booking, he got charged with attempting to bring drugs into the jail. He had so many prior convictions that the drug charge there put him over the top and earned him another stay in prison. Not jail….PRISON. Think about this for a moment – he went back to prison because he forgot to get the meth out of his front shirt pocket. What kind of a brain-fried moron do you have to be to forget about the drugs in your shirt pocket when you're in police custody?!?







The mechanic who rented a house and filled the driveway with so many old junked project cars that they overflowed out onto the street. Nobody in the neighborhood was happy; they called 911 all the time to complain. This went for a few years. Then one day the mechanic stopped renting and he bought his own house, and moved away. The neighborhood was happy again. But it turns out the house he bought was on the same street, literally just two houses away from his old rental.





One night we caught 8 Navy SEALS after a bar fight; USN v USCG. USN won of course. I really wish the SEALS had got away though; their designated sober driver really did not do a good enough job being the getaway driver of their white navy van. While I was carefully typing my report, I just kept thinking about how many high ranking officers and JAG's in who knows how many different commands were going to be reading it. I heard later the SEALS were all transferred to the Middle East somewhere.



A citizen in a motel hears breaking glass across the parking lot. Looks out, sees a freshly broken window at the business across the parking lot. Calls 911. I respond. Yep, there's a very large broken window on the ground outside the office building; unlike any other broken window I've seen because the whole thing has been popped out and is in pieces on the ground outside, with the frame still around it. This is broad daylight on a quiet Sunday, I should mention. Six other officers arrive; two on containment to watch two opposing corners of the business, two out in front, and three to search the interior. I go in through the window with my taser out, my partner has his handgun. We open an outside door to let in the third guy who has a ballistic shield. We slowly and methodically clear the building; there is no sign of entry or burglary. We conclude nobody came in through the window; the desk underneath has undisturbed papers neatly lined up; nobody came in through or out that window. I go back outside and study the window in great detail. It was not kicked out, and it was not pried off. I conclude the only logical explanation is that somebody walking by with some kind of giant suction cups must have grabbed onto the window panel and pulled it out intact; when it hit the ground 4 feet away it then broke. Maybe a bored teenager? I never did find out if my theory was the correct one but that is literally the one and only most likely explanation.





Later that day, another weird call to 911; some guy reports his laundry was stolen out of the apartment complex laundry room. From the clothes washer. Not the dryer. That's right, somebody stole his WET clothes. I spent the rest of my shift hoping that I'd run across some weirdo walking around with suction cup grippers and wet clothes. That would have been awesome. It didn't happen. Police work has a lot of unsatisfactory ending shifts.





One day the police dispatcher got on the radio and advised the Bainbridge Island police that a motorist was reporting a large pack of sport bikes northbound on Hwy 305 doing 75 mph, passing cars on both sides. I heard the dispatch and realized they'd be in my jurisdiction pretty quickly so I went south on 305 toward the city limits and found a spot to wait for them. Sure enough, a couple minutes later I see about a dozen flashy motorcycles in a big group coming my way. I got in behind them and they saw me right away so they were all doing the speed limit. Very good, that's what I wanted to see, y'all behave yourselves in my town here. Two of them broke away from the pack and turned right onto a side street, which I didn't think much of until another pair broke off and took the next left. "That's weird," I thought. "But still a big group here, so I'll stick with them." At the next random side street two more bikers turned off and I really started to get squinty eyed suspicious. Do I grab those two, or stay with the pack? I figured I'd stay with the majority. Then another two peeled off and away, and then another two, and a mile later by the time I really realized what was going on I was down to just one biker who had also turned off onto a side street. When I pulled him over he played dumb and said he didn't know the other guys at all and didn't even know where they were all going. Clearly though, they had some kind pre-arranged dispersal plan and it had worked pretty well. Although I bet it took them awhile to regroup since they were all from Seattle and most of them probably had no idea what roads they were detouring onto. In the end, I decided it was about 10% aggravating and 90% funny, especially since it took me so long to realize that they had been strategically thinning their ranks. I suppose they were hoping that I would have pulled over the first two and let the rest of the pack get away. I still smile thinking about that event; that was well done, fellas.

I pulled over a car for a seatbelt violation. Gave the driver a warning only; no ticket. He then gratefully offered me a fresh Krispy Crème donut; he had a whole box of them. No, I didn't accept it, that would have been wrong. Like, yeah..really wrong.





We had caught a burglar. Heroin addict, of course. I took him to jail. He didn't want to go to jail but he was already in cuffs so his options were pretty limited. So halfway to the jail he faked a seizure in the back seat, and forced me to call for an ambulance to divert him to the hospital emergency room. After awhile when it became clear to him that the doctors weren't buying his act either and he'd have to continue along to the jail, he borrowed a phone and while alone in an exam room, he called 911 to report there was a bomb at the hospital. Too bad for him the call was easily traced to the, uh, phone he had borrowed. Oh and the surveillance cameras in the room also caught it all on video, despite his denials. And the 911 call was recorded at the 911 call center too, with his dumb voice. So when he went to jail he had a couple extra (and very serious) additional felony charges. Apparently you can get in a lot of trouble for calling in a bomb threat to a hospital; something about "Interfering with Hospital Operations.."





Here's a story that is not mine – I got this gem from a Bremerton cop: He told me that he and his partner were checking out a suspicious car in a dark alley one night. Movement in the car. Cop and his partner close in, light it up with their flashlights. What do they see in there? One guy. Alone. Naked. Uh, raping himself at knifepoint. You know, as one does.



Nursing home director reported a 92 year old resident had been kissing and groping elderly female residents. The old man had already been removed from the facility by his family, so the case was already closed. The director offered me the opportunity to go talk to the 88 year woman who had agreed initially to a hug from the old guy but in the process got one of her boobs grabbed by the old man. I politely declined; it wasn't a prosecutable case and so at that point I just really wanted to leave the building and not think about old men grabbing old women's boobs.

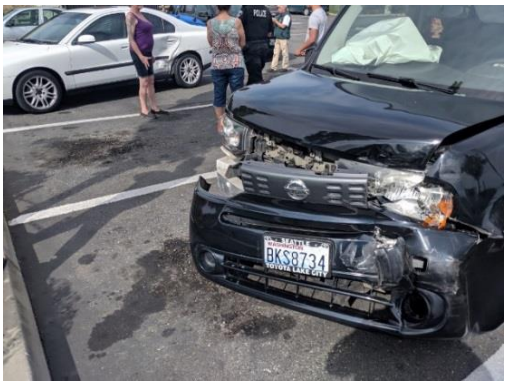
For awhile we had an old homeless hobo with long hair and beard who wandered the streets of our town. With a Burger King cardboard crown on his head. It was awesome.





Like every cop in the world who ever wore a gunbelt, mine would occasionally get in the way; at some point I probably banged into every doorway or car door I regularly met at least once or twice. (If you ever look real close at the drivers side door of any patrol car, you'll see scratches caused by officers' holstered guns banging into the door frame). Only once did I make the mistake of losing spatial awareness of my right thumb when I sat down; I learned quickly that putting a hand down on a seat and then plopping down so the holstered gun barrel smashes the thumb into the seat can cause a significantly high level of pain.





I had caught a guy driving with suspended drivers license. I called a tow truck to impound his car. He got so mad he threw his cell phone onto the pavement, exactly like a quarterback spiking a football. But really mad, not happy. He was about 3 feet away from me. It was mildly alarming for a moment, but then he calmed down.





The ranting drunk man on his house balcony overlooking the street, disturbing the peace. The neighbors called on him. I walk up the house and look up at him. He yelled out to me "FUCK!.. THE!.." And I of course thought for sure he was going to say "POLICE!" but instead he caught me off guard and ended instead with, because he was pretty drunk: "BRITISH!"

The time a scuba instructor brought his handgun into the school's public pool locker room, and failed to notice the teenager watching him. Although the guy locked his gun in a locker, he then put the key to the lock..uh..into a bag hanging on the wall, making it pretty easy for the kid to then steal his gun. The kid was later caught. The scuba instructor was rightfully prosecuted in municipal court for bringing a gun onto school property but the kid was not prosecuted in juvenile court for possessing a gun on school property; a charging decision nobody could understand. Welcome to the criminal justice system.





1 a.m. in a nursing home: Emergency aid crew confirms the dead-looking 92 year old resident is indeed dead. Old age, natural causes, dead. They pack up their EKG heart monitors and gear and leave, with me right behind them. The head nurse on staff, a new gal, stops me. "Uh...what...what..do I do now?!?" she asks with slight bit of panic in her voice. I stare at her quizzically. "Is this your first dead person you've seen here? Did they not tell you this was going to happen? I'm sure there's a checklist here somewhere you should consult.."



56 year old woman is slumped over her steering wheel in the WalMart parking lot. People notice. She revives herself, and goes back to inhaling chemicals from cans of compressed air, because everybody needs a hobby I guess. Alarmed witnesses call 911. I arrive and find the woman in an altered mental state; she's just finished her 6th can. First thing I do is reach into her car and remove the keys from ignition, because I don't trust her. I turn my back on her for a few seconds to call for an aid car and all the witnesses start yelling because she's grabbed a 7th can of liquid difluoroethane and started to furiously inhale from it. See? I told you I didn't trust her! So I have to quickly grab her and drag her out of the car to an ambulance that just arrived. Woman goes to the hospital. In addition to the difluoroethane saturating her blood and infusing her brain, she's got freezer burns on her hands from holding the cans which turned freezing cold when used. And the skinny red tube she used to suck the chemicals in while pressing the trigger? Yeah, that got cold enough to freeze her lips too, and turn them bloody. The worst part is, the initial "high" from inhaling that stuff lasts only about 5 minutes per can. Then the destroyed liver and kidneys have to spend the next couple weeks trying to neutralize and process all those nasty chemicals. She said the reason why she was doing that was because her son had died.



The Santa Claus protester. In December he went downtown to the Santa Claus Holiday House and started yelling at the kids and parents waiting in line that Santa was a fraud and as good Christians they needed to stop encouraging their kids to believe in Santa, etc. etc. That ended when Santa Claus petitioned the local judge for an anti-harassment order, which the judge gladly signed, ordering the Santa hater to stay 500 feet away from Santa. Problem solved.



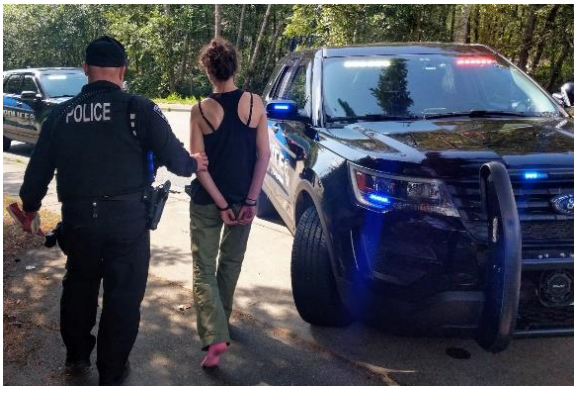



A few months later, Santa Hater is now out in front of the Mormon church with a megaphone being obnoxious to all the folks going in to church. "Hey people your leader and prophet was a polygamous pedophile who was jailed or kicked out of every place he tried to settle his followers in! Wake up and smell the coffee! Oh wait that's right you don't drink coffee! Well you should, it tastes delicious!"





Resident Englishman (complete with accent) comes home to his house from a business trip to discover there had been a big teen drinking party there while he was away. Beer bottles, solo cups, liquor bottles, cigarette butts just everywhere. Items missing from various rooms. Dirt all over the floors. Hot tub probably should be drained, I suggest. Shane the Great Dane saw everything but he wasn't no snitch; maybe the kids had bribed his silence with some alcohol. The topper was the underwear in the master bedroom that some teenager had left behind.





Woman was walking down the sidewalk. Random weird guy approached her and punched her in the face. She fought him off and he ran away and was never seen again. No idea who he was; I presume he was passing through town. I never was able to solve that one. Poor woman was quite traumatized.



Homeless heroin addict on a crime spree broke into a car and stole some things. He got caught in the act, 911 was called, bad guy fled. I got called right away and I was hot on his trail. I started looking around the area, wondering where a piece of shit of rat criminal would be hiding. I was driving around, looking under porches and decks. Found him crouched under a porch, with his recently stolen loot spread out in front of him. He didn't see me until I had walked right up to him. "Come out here, asshole," I said to him. He crawled out and I helped him by grabbing onto his collar and yarding him out. He was so malnourished and underweight I wound up pulling him out much harder and further than I expected. I booked him into the jail and when he got a little squirrelly with the corrections officers in the intake area, one of the guards slammed him up against the wall really hard. Later, the guard sheepishly admitted he had not meant to be that aggressive with the prisoner. "The guy is actually pretty scrawny, I didn't realize he was such a lightweight.." I smiled back at him. "I know right? I didn't expect that either!"







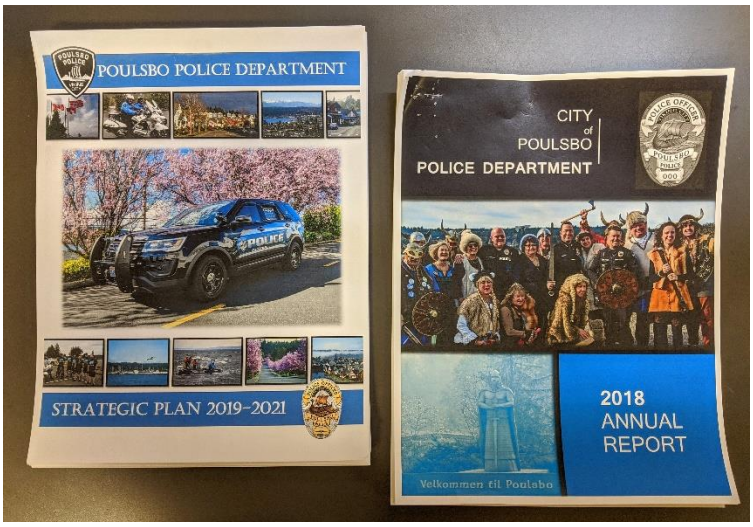
Me interviewing a very, very drunk young man. He's so drunk he's getting strapped down onto an ambulance. He notices my mini notebook cover which had I had just found at the dollar store; it was one of those 3D refractive covers that happened to show kittens on a psychedelic background. Drunk man got highly agitated seeing it. The other police officer present is quite amused. As the aid crew is strapping down the drunk guy on the gurney I flash the notebook cover a couple more times him; each time he freaks out a little bit more and starts flailing and yelling again. Aid crew was not amused.



Car crash scene. Old lady at fault insisted it was the other driver's fault. A helpful citizen then showed me the video recording his dash cam had caught of the incident; he had been a couple cars away in traffic, had a great view, and I was quite pleased when the old lady saw the recording and then (had to) shut up about how it hadn't been her own fault.

Hysterical mother picked up her 3 year old daughter from her babysitter's house. Mom was freaking out because there was a Strange Car in the driveway! And then a Strange Man answered the door! The police were called! I watched with raised eyebrows as mom ran her daughter outside to her minivan asking repeatedly "Did anybody touch you? Did anybody touch you? Did anybody touch you?" Daughter said "No" every time. Mom, not convinced, stripped daughter's clothes off and did an immediate full body exam by the sidewalk. I tried to assure her that daughter appeared to be totally fine. Four minutes later, the daughter, trying to be a helpful 3 year old, said "Mommy, somebody touched me." Mom looked at me and said "She might be saying that because I planted the idea in her head." Yeah, no shit. I told her that asking leading questions like that to little kids was so sensitive that police officers were not even allowed to question them like that; only highly trained special child interviewers are allowed to go there. Because little kids can be highly susceptible!







The man who called 911 to report finding a door to a large metal safe in his son's trunk. Dad drove the car to me, popped the trunk and showed me the huge safe door in there; obviously cut and ripped off the rest of the safe. Yep, it was from a safe heist. We found the rest of the safe and loot in the boy's bedroom; proceeds from a residential burglary.







A young woman not old enough to buy alcohol got caught buying alcohol. Her professionally made fake ID card looked good but of course had no matching record in the state database. Tragically for her, she had turned 21 just a week earlier and actually didn't need to keep using the fake ID anymore.







I crowned myself the police department Hide and Seek Champion when I found three criminals trying to hide from me – three different cases in one two-week period. First was the guy in the closet, then a gal hiding in a car, and then a guy hiding in the woods. I told all my coworkers that if we were going to start an intramural hide and seek tournament, I'd be the captain of one of the teams.





Marital discord at a city council member's house. The wife had filed a restraining order against her abusive husband. A couple days later he needed to get back into his house to pick up his medications, so I escorted him back there. I stupidly waited downstairs while he ran upstairs to get his pills; I figured as long as he came back within about 30 seconds holding only a couple pill bottles and not a lock box or a tv or her suitcase, it would be fine and I could respect his privacy. 20 seconds later all hell broke loose, because unknown to both of us the wife person was home. In the bedroom. In the bed. With her new boyfriend. That led to a lot of sudden loud yelling. Very awkward. Husband and I had of course thought the house was empty.



That was not the only time I'd surprised people in bed like that. Unintentionally, of course. Also related to the above story, some time after that incident some public works guys called me. They had been cleaning out the storm drains and had recovered a massive keychain with about 30 keys on it. It had been in the bottom of the storm drain a few months, at least, and was pretty slimy green and funky. An ID tag on it identified it as belonging to the council member, a block away. I brought it back to her. She stared at it for awhile and mentioned that it had mysteriously disappeared from the house a few months ago. She didn't say that her husband had gotten mad and dumped them. She didn't need to.





The 30 year old woman who fell asleep while driving on the highway at 60 mph. Somehow her moving car found a small car-sized gap in the cable barrier designed to stop cars from going into the other oncoming traffic lanes. Threading the needle at 60 mph and still sound asleep, her car went almost a quarter mile in the ditch on the inside median of the oncoming traffic on the wrong side of the highway before finally slowing to a stop. Perplexing all the first responders who could only see an intact cable barrier and yet her car facing the wrong way, on the wrong side of the highway. Injuries to self and others: none. Miraculous.





House fire! Kind of suspicious because the fire “accidentally” started in the house the day after the potential buyers had backed out of buying it. Firefighters and Officers responding to the scene remembered that the house owner also had a “accidental” garage/shop fire a few years earlier. Yes, of course both buildings had insurance coverage. Both cases were turned over to arson investigators.





Me, in a house with a CPS worker who is taking away a woman’s teenage son. Because mom had taken son out of school to about 40 doctors’ appointments for medical ailments he didn’t have and existed only in her imagination. The woman was upset her son was being taken away. “I’m calling the police!” she yelled. Myself and the other officer present pointed out we WERE the police. “I’m calling other police then!”



The lady who got caught picking up a box of insulin test strips from a pharmacy; her scamming partner had called the pharmacy and convinced them he was the distributer doing a safety recall and so he was sending in a courier to pick up their recent delivery. I don’t know which was more interesting, the fact that the woman used to be a local volunteer police officer, or the fact that the test strips were a commodity on the black market, or the audacity of the scammers to call the pharmacy and pull it off.







Pre-dawn, empty church parking lot. Me, watching a guy who is standing alone in the parking lot, staring up the parking lot lights. Just..staring at them. Oh and his arms were outstretched too. He was kind of really focused on those lights. Reason: drugs.





On patrol, and a deep burgundy-colored exotic sports car passed me at an intersection. I didn't recognize the make or model but the hood was so wide there was definitely a huge V12 under there. An emblem revealed its heritage: Aston Martin. I googled the MSRP and when I saw it was over $200,000 dollars I turned around to hunt it down. A couple minutes later the driver parked it in a public parking lot so I was able to approach him on foot and ask a bunch of questions about it. Because I was being polite and charming he didn't mind, and he even opened the hood and doors to show it off to me. Would I have been able to start a conversation with him as a civilian, or would he have just brushed me off? Sometimes being in uniform has its advantages.







I pulled over a flower delivery driver because she wasn't wearing her seatbelt. She admitted she should know better since she was a retired 911 dispatcher. I was flabbergasted. "How many phone calls did you take over the years about crashed cars and people all messed up because they didn't put on a seatbelt?!?" She admitted it was hundreds. And added then: "I know, you're right, you're right, I really should drive with my seatbelt on.." I figured my lecture was harsh enough, no ticket necessary. And then a month later.. I caught her again...still not bothering to buckle up. I don't understand people.



Another story that wasn't mine personally but I just have to share: One of my coworkers pulled over a woman after she threw her lit cigarette out her car window. She explains to him in a very "well look it's obvious of course" tone that her dashboard cigarette ashtray was overflowing with ashes and butts. Officer went back to his car and started writing a big ticket. He looked up just in time to see the woman open her car door and fix the whole overflowing ashtray problem by nonchalantly dumping all the cigarette butts and ashes out onto the road.

I got called to mitigate a domestic dispute. The married couple, both deaf, were dog breeders. Being deaf, they were oblivious to the non-stop barking that their packs of terriers were committing upon the neighborhood. Worst neighbors to ever have: Deaf. Dog. Breeders. Right up there with the Professional Chain Saw Carving Guy.



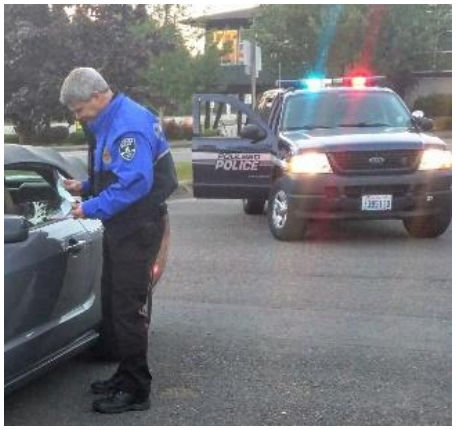


The homeowner who was mad that the police were going to tow his broken-down blighted piece of junk car out of his driveway. Given 10 days to comply with the law, he found a loophole and erected a large blue tarp canopy frame over it, complete with blue tarp sides. He pointed out that his car was now in a "building" and therefore legal. The city prosecutor had to research the definition of a "building" and concluded that the owner was yes, actually in compliance. Of course that didn't make the neighbors happy at all; his driveway now looked worse. The really funny thing was, he could have saved a couple hundred dollars by just putting air in the tires and paying a neighbor kid or somebody to wash the algae and dirt off of the car, but instead he went for the blue tarp look. Well he showed us.



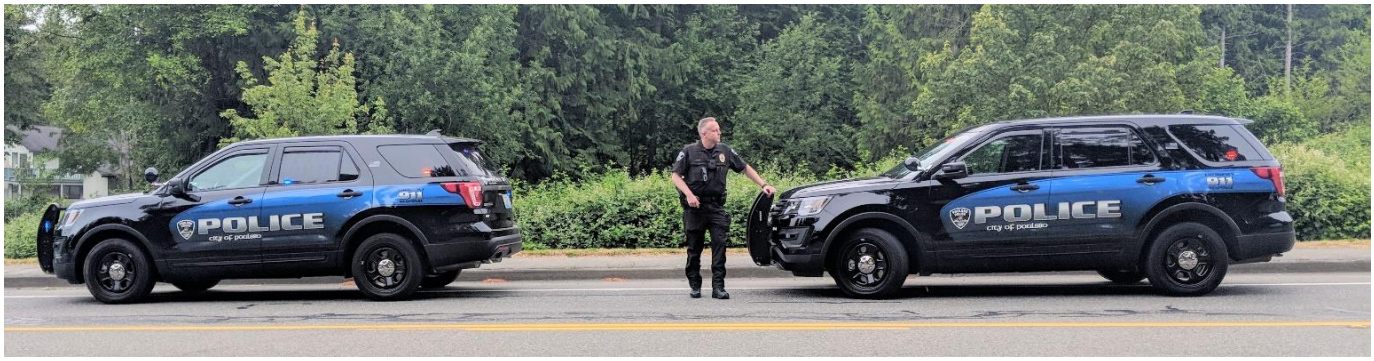


Me, investigating a death scene in an apartment. Nothing too suspicious; the decedent had been in poor health and was a lifelong heavy smoker. Exhibit A in the bedroom: the dead body. Exhibit B out on balcony: a giant concrete bird bath that had been repurposed as an ashtray. It was overflowing with a giant mound of literally hundreds and hundreds of used cigarette butts.





The time I saw a deputy coroner at a death scene call the next of kin to deliver the news. His offer of condolences fell flat though when he kept saying the wrong name, which I thought was positively hilarious. I know..I'm going to hell.



When I was a School Resource Officer, I caught a high school kid once who had pulled the fire alarm and caused an evacuation of the school. He later explained he was curious about how far down he could pull the lever before it activated. I told him he was probably going to be excluded from ever getting a job in a nuclear power plant. Or on a submarine. Or on a space station.





A sailor and his girlfriend were at a party one night. When they left and went back to their car, they found broken glass. I looked it over and announced with some authority that whoever had done it was mad at one them, and yes this one was personal. Because the car had not one, not two, but three broken-in windows, which is exactly two more than the average car prowler breaks to get into a random car.



I impounded a driver's pickup truck because his license to drive was suspended. Funny part was, I wasn't even planning to check his name, I was just going to give him a simple warning for speeding and do a real quick catch and release. But he "wanted to be honest" with me so he blurted out right away "I don't have a valid drivers license!" Again, I wasn't even going to bother to check that. That statement cost him well over $1,000 dollars in tickets and a very expensive tow bill for his truck. Which he was living in. So..yeah..I towed his home, too. Remember folks, you have the right to remain silent, and anything you say can be used against you.

Local resident (named Thor) called to complain that his ex-wife had taken their two young children away on vacation and now she was refusing to bring them back. From Iceland.





Guy had an elderly mother with dementia. She couldn't remember anything past a day so she needed somebody to live with her. Son didn't want to do that himself so he invited a homeless dude in to live with mom and keep an eye on her. Room and board free, just watch the old lady. Homeless dude then guess what invites other homeless people in. Son calls police after a week when all the food and the new flat screen TV are gone. Responding officer (me) is not really too sympathetic about how that all turned out.





Reminds me of the time a local woman got sent off to prison after winding up in jail too many times. Shortly after she was gone, her mother called the police to report noticing her daughter's TV had been stolen from her apartment. I showed up. Figuring the TV was probably stolen from somebody else in the first place, my sympathy meter didn't move much that time either.



The two dumb teenagers who discovered you can buy a cheap DIY tattoo gun set off eBay for less than $40 bucks; the stupider one let herself be the test canvas for several amateur tattoos of exceedingly and just epic poor quality. Their parents freaked out and a couple thousand dollars was later spent on laser zapping them away as best they could. I took pictures but didn't save them, unfortunately. God those were shitty tattoos. I really wish I had kept those pictures. Much ragrets.





We had an RV parts thief for a while; on random nights he'd hit the two local RV dealerships and break into new travel trailers and steal, well, random parts. Light switches, under-cabinet wood work, a hot water heater, a small furnace, and cabinet doors. He was clearly fixing up his own travel trailer, but every time he broke into a new trailer he damaged the door locks and the lot owners were not amused at all with the random missing parts. He eventually got caught. Along with the criminal prosecution, he got hit with a bill to pay back the insurance companies that paid for the damages; well over $50,000 dollars.





I pulled over a shiny black big Suburban because the driver was holding his cell phone up to his ear while driving. The driver turned out to be a plainclothes non-uniformed Washington State Trooper, assigned to the Executive Protection Detail. He was on his way to pick up the Governor, who lived on nearby Bainbridge Island. He explained to me that he was talking to his WSP Lieutenant to figure out which ferry boat had the least wait time/delay. Good thing the Governor wasn't with him when I pulled him over…that would have been just awkward as hell..uh, for all of us.





The time I was in a woman's house, staring in wonderment at her huge display of 100 marathon medals on the wall. God that was impressive. All lined up on a board about 6 feet long, all kinds and colors of flashy medals hanging from colorful ribbons, I really want to get a picture of that. Super impressive. You might think somebody who could run 100 marathons would generally have their act together, right? You might be wrong; I had to take her jail for assaulting her husband. She was a hot mess. I think she was the kind of person who wasn't running toward finish lines so much as she was running away from starting lines.

The time I tackled a bad guy in the Walmart right inside the front door. I must have looked like I had things under control because a lot of customers casually walked past me while I was struggling with him; the surveillance recordings showed them barely giving me a second glance. Welcome to WalMart!





Me, getting called out again to a neighbor dispute where two grown men have taken to tossing random rocks and sticks onto each other's property when nobody is looking. While I was out there shaking my head at all the rocks tossed onto this guy's driveway, the mad neighbor runs out in his bathrobe and starts yanking out all the surveyor stakes that had just been expensively marked out by the other neighbor's survey crew to determine their exact property line. The crazy man is ripping out the markers literally just feet from me. He believed they were on his property line. "Hey excuse me sir, uh, I'm pretty sure that's totally illegal to do that!" I said, kind of too stunned to react. He then ran back inside. One of the few times I was so surprised I just stood there with my mouth hanging open. The guy was a retired chemist. The older I get, the less I understand people.



Woman called 911 to report she got locked out of her apartment. By her 11 year old daughter. I found an unlocked window and was able to get inside. Found the 11 year old hiding in her closet. She didn't want to talk about it. Or anything, really. She was not really right in the head. And the mom was, of all things, a school teacher. I of course suggested to mom that she hide a spare key outside somewhere. Did she listen to me? Nope. What do you think happened again a couple months later?





Idiot burglar decides to break into a business in the middle of the night. Realizing it had a monitored alarm system, he called the alarm company's main number and said he was the owner of the business and forgot his code so if the alarm goes off, no need to call the police okay? Nice try but totally didn't work. The alarm company called the police. He went off to prison.

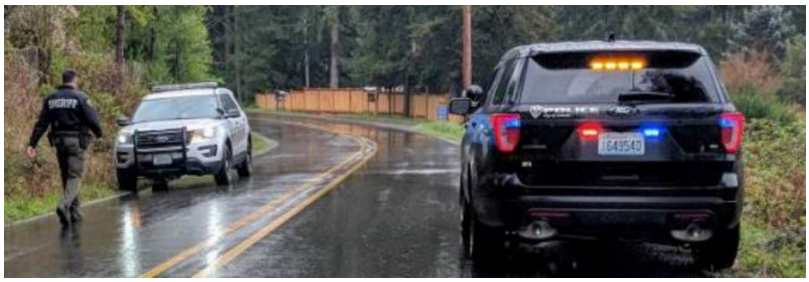
There I am in an ambulance, watching the aid crew treat a panting, panicking 22 year old guy overdosing on meth. His main problem is that he's overheating badly. He looks funny. I study him closely. It doesn't take long at all to figure out why he looks funny; he's got no eyebrows. I ask him about that. He tells me that when he started to overheat a little while ago, his "friends" suggested he could cool off if "his skin could breathe better" which they were able to convince him could be possible if he shaved his head bald. Which he quickly did. When that didn't work, next went his arm hair, and then in desperation he shaved off his eyebrows too. Cause, you know…meth.





Housecleaner maid person cleaning a guy's house sees his computer screen saver is displaying images from a file it should not have been accessing; the images were child porn. Quick thinking housecleaner takes a couple pictures of the screen on her cell phone and calls the police. FBI get involved. Showed up at his work to seize his computer there; his boss readily agreed. The boss was the Chief of the Fire Department. The perv was one of the Fire Department Battalion Chiefs. He insisted a virus must have put all that child porn on his computers. He was lying. He went to prison. Sad; we had all thought he was a great guy. Because we had no idea about the child porn predilection.





The woman who was convinced her kids were being targeted by a child snatcher; they had almost been lured or carried off more than once! From her front porch! And she had decided the entire police force was not taking her seriously so she started a letter writing campaign to the mayor to complain about the police, and there was a child snatcher on the loose out there! Was there really a child snatcher loose? No, no there wasn't. Maybe a door to door salesman and/or a surveyor, but she was absolutely fixated that her precious little kids were completely snatchable targets. Number of other residents in the city complaining about child luring: None. Number of kids actually abducted? None. But that woman would not be convinced otherwise.





The rat man house; an old, extremely dilapidated, falling apart rotten double wide mobile home. The one with the dead guy in it. Who was a hoarder. And the rats. Hungry rats. And one dead guy. You can probably guess what happened. It was stunningly epic. No, you don't get any more details you have to use your imagination.

1991: One of my coworker officers wanted to resign because the new officer being hired was a female (!) human woman (!!) person police officer. It wasn't personal against her, he just had strong feelings that female women people should not be cops. The stupid police chief back then talked him out of it, for reasons I'll never understand. It took a long time, but the male officer eventually got fired. He had problems with, uh, female women people in general.







The flatbed tow truck delivering a broken Jeep Cherokee to an auto repair place. Destination not reached because the tow truck driver swerved to avoid a collision on the road and his truck rolled down an embankment into a creek and landed upside down. It took two other tow trucks to winch it out. The Jeep had been very securely chained onto the flatbed, so it stayed on. Of course when the Jeep landed upside down in the creek with the flatbed tow truck on top of it, it got crunched. I felt pretty happy for the owner of that Jeep, since it was obviously broken to start with. I could imagine the tow truck company owner calling him and saying "Say, um, about your Jeep that was broken? Well, um, something happened and it's not going to be fixable anymore. So, um, you're getting a brand new Jeep now to replace it."





Woman catches her 6 year old daughter in her teenage stepson's bedroom. Stepson looked guilty as hell and the girl's panties were disturbingly on backwards. Police are called. (That's me). I arrested stepson, booked him into the juvenile detention center. Woman and daughter immediately moved out, leaving dad to figure out how to fix his son. The stepson/suspect/violator had been on my son's swim team. Somehow his lawyer got him out of lockup within a couple days, but he's a permanent registered sex offender for the rest of his life now.



The business owner who owned half of the real estate downtown was beyond upset one morning. He called for the police. I showed up. He pointed out that people were parking in his bakery employee parking spots, and so they all deserved parking tickets. I pointed out to the man that the cars belonged to all the poor people – literally..poor people - waiting in line at the food bank next door. This being the day before Thanksgiving, they were picking up their special holiday baskets of Thanksgiving food. Business owner kept demanding I do something. I left.

Shoplifter thief woman tried to sneak out the doors at WalMart with several hundred dollars' worth of unpaid merchandise, too bad for her both of the undercover loss prevention associates had been watching her. She put up a big flailing fight complete with hair pulling and faked indignant yelling for help and she managed to break away and run to her getaway car and leave the scene before the police arrived in emergency mode. In the scuffle though, she had got separated from her wallet. Inside the wallet: her Department of Corrections' probation officer's business card, and a bail bond card, and her urinalysis check-in card, her state-issued public assistance benefits card, the usual club cards from the 5 nearest casinos (I swear to God just about every thief I've ever arrested had multiple casino membership cards!) and of course, her state-issued ID card.





The teenager who rolled his new truck going downhill. I mean rolled like not on all 4 wheels on the ground but with the wheels in the air and then on the ground and then in air again because the truck is tumbling sideways; that kind of rolling, and the kid forgot that rule about keeping your arms inside the vehicle. He lost a couple fingers when the truck smeared them into the pavement at high speed while rolling. The parents were really mad at the truck salesman for selling them that 4x4 truck. Cause that's why the truck rolled. Because it was 4-wheel drive, you know. They wanted the 2 wheel drive, not the (deadly) 4 wheel drive model. Funny thing was, I never saw any other 4 wheel drive truck ever roll down that hill sideways. Made me think it was the driver's fault, not the vehicles'.







One day I got dispatched to investigate a residential alarm activation; the home owner was away on vacation and her adult son, the one with the extensive criminal record, was in the garage and he refused to open the door for me. He said he had permission to be there. In the garage. Not the house. Just the garage. He refused to open the door. The alarm in the house was going off. Oh did I mention it was the mayor's house. And the guy in the garage was indeed her kind of halfway estranged son; the one with the drug problem. Mayor was not able to be contacted to confirm anything. That whole situation was something like a scenario that would posed to a new police applicant, to judge their suggested solution. It was what you could call..a conundrum.



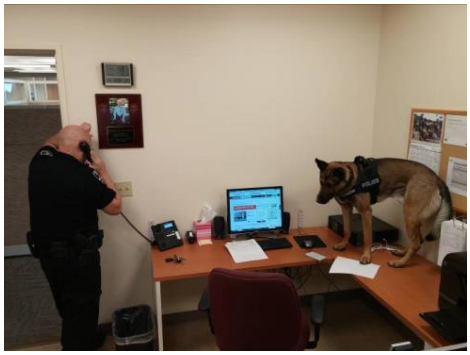


The sidewalk protester in town who picketed a local RV dealership daily, upset about a verbal contract not being honored for warranty work on the trailer he had bought. He protested every day for 8 months. Dealership found a judge to issue a restraining order against protester. Protestor appealed the order with a different judge, who agreed the order was unlawful. As the old guy/protester was walking out of courtroom, the RV corporate lawyers stopped him and asked him what his next move was. "I'm going back to the sidewalk, of course," he answered. They sighed and asked him what he wanted. Guy was later seen driving away in a giant top of the line super expensive brand new class A motorhome, with no monthly payments.

Here we see a fella with issues who had wrapped himself in plastic like a mummy and was staggering down the highway, almost getting hit by cars. After a very short conversation with him it was decided he should leave town. Strapped down on a stretcher, in an aid car, to go get his head examined. One look at him and I had immediately determined he was going to be a two-officer contact, since Weird Dude was also carrying a long wooden stake. You know, as one does, whilst wrapped in plastic.



The two different business owners shared an office space. When their planned merger fell through the older woman demanded her desk and shelves back immediately from the younger woman, and then the older woman swept everything onto the floor to take them back. Offensive as hell but not actually a criminal act; nothing was broken..so no crime.







Me, in the Walmart parking lot talking to an upset woman who had just encountered some strange men who had been bothering her. “The one thing I’ve learned in this job, is that weird things happen. And it can happen at any time, to anybody, even randomly.” As I finish talking to her, another customer approaches me. “Excuse me officer, um, there’s a naked man in that van over there.”





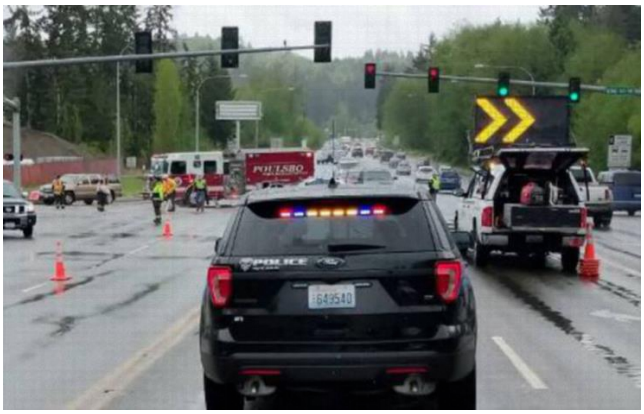


The motorcyclist who incited a road rage incident that resulted in a very aggressive car driver tailgating him less than three feet off his rear tire at freeway speeds on a back country road; when the motorcyclist pulled over and stopped, the car driver got out and then started swinging a nun chuck at him. Good thing he was wearing a helmet. I was all like "Wait, he did whaaaaaat?!?!





The old man who got mad at the new transit bus parking lot across the street from his house. He got mad that the bus drivers started warming up the buses at 4 am, so he started throwing rocks and sticks over the fence into their lot. It was maybe not coincidental that shortly after that, the bus drivers decided they had been parking the buses the wrong way, so every morning at about 4 am they'd back them up in reverse and repark them: BEEEP BEEEP BEEEP BEEEP BEEEP BEEEP BEEEP BEEEP BEEEP





The used car lot owner - who looked like Gene Hackman's brother, complete with hairy chest and gold chains – had his gun collection stolen from his showroom office vault. A lot of guns. Like, several dozen. "You gotta get em back, officer!" He cried. "Well give me the master inventory list with all the serial numbers," was my reply. "I would, but the list was in the safe and they stole the list too!" Facepalm. Dear Reader: don't keep your inventory lists in the exact same place as the valuables. (Some of those stolen guns kept popping up in police custody in other jurisdictions, going on 20 years later..!)





Early morning. Driver fell asleep and very inadvertently crossed the highway median (before the new cable barriers had been installed to stop exactly what she did) and her car ran head on into another driver coming the other direction. Killed the other driver pretty much instantly. He was on his way to work. He got completely smashed between the steering wheel and seat. I arrived in response to the dispatch, got there within about a minute, and I saw the dead driver crushed in his car. I had known his daughter. Woman at fault was still sitting in her Jeep, she was unhurt but in a complete state of dazed mental shock. Was not really aware there was a dead guy stuck in the car that she had just smashed into. She looked at me and slowly asked "What..happened?"

3-car MVC on SR 305 caused by a distracted driver in an Acura who ran into the back of a Chevy, that was then shoved into the back of a Mazda that had been in the very front. I issued a ticket to the Acura driver who had caused it all and she asked me "Am I the only one who getting a ticket?" Insinuating that I should have cited other drivers, I guess, so I asked her for her opinion, since it looked like she had one: "Uh, do you believe the other drivers should get ticketed too?" Her answer surprised me: "That guy in front of me..he's the one who hit that car in front of him, so..yeah!"





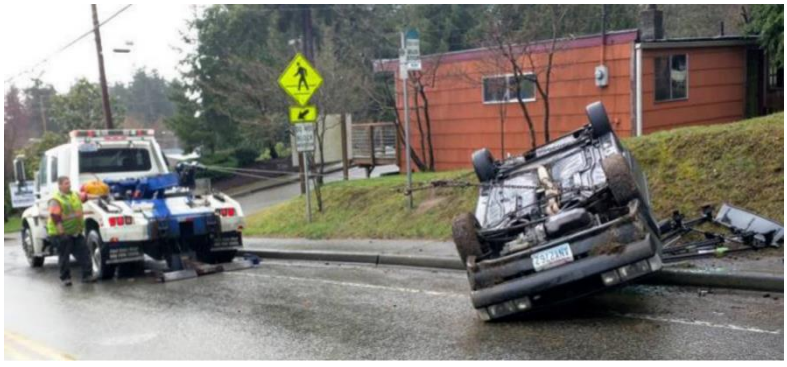
Old man left his car running, parked in front of a grocery store while he was inside shopping. I noticed, and waited for him to come out so I could educate him on the Dangers of Leaving Your Car Running Outside a Grocery Store. Danger #1 of course is that somebody will steal it. He came out and I pointed out to him that such a thing had actually happened just a month earlier, in front of the same store there. "Well I wanted to keep the engine going so it would be warmed up when I came back out to it," he explained to me. I pointed out to him that he was driving a brand new 2007 Toyota Avalon and unlike his 1941 Dodge diesel pickup truck, his new sedan was perfectly ok to be started up "cold".





Tire tracks in the grass lawn at the elementary school. Big, obnoxious tire tracks; obviously some 20-something year old with a big pickup truck was being an asshole and not caring about the school grounds. The truck was long gone when I got there but left behind in the middle of the crime scene was a large round plastic light cover, for one of the 4 huge auxiliary lights that was mounted on the roof of the truck cab. I recognized that cover, knew the truck it belonged to, and was super pleased when I hunted down that truck to see three matching light covers on the roof of the truck. And one missing one. Oh wait, it wasn't missing it was in my hand.





911 call for an old guy under a house. It was a very hot summer day and grandpa had gone under the house to work on something and now he wasn't answering his phone or making noise or coming out and grandma was quite sure he'd had a heart attack or something in there and the fire department showed up and they were getting ready to go in after him when he crawled back out perfectly fine, quite bemused to see all the fuss his wife had worked up over him. I think he had found it peaceful and quiet in there and maybe was trying to get some alone time away from his wife.

I was working one night for a multi-agency task force, focusing on seat belt emphasis patrols. About a dozen extra cops were out and we're all pulling over violators and I pulled over a teenager, no seat belt, and I realized she was the daughter of the woman who was the coordinator for the whole event. The girl even said "You might know my mom? She's doing a task force thing tonight, but I'm not sure where it is." I didn't know whether to laugh or get mad. I told her "Oh, you're in it right now," and I already had her mother's number in my phone, which I promptly called. Boy was mom embarrassed to hell. Of course I didn't ticket the girl, but it sure was amusing to catch the task force coordinator's daughter as one my violators that night.





Car crash scene. The young girl driver who caused the accident is upset and smoking cigarettes like a chimney. Her mother shows up and is consoling her. I'm processing the paperwork, using the bar code scanner in my patrol car to record the drivers licenses and vehicle registrations for the traffic collision report form, when I realize the girl is under age for smoking. I get out of my car and yell "Hey! How old are you!?!?" and she replies "Seventeen." Long moment while I try to calm down, but can't. "Get that damn cigarette out of your mouth!" I then started yelling at the mother, who tried to convince me that her daughter, fresh out of rehab, was doing great and that her cigarette usage is nothing compared to the drugs and alcohol she had recently being doing. "Hey mom, here's an idea," I told her sternly. "Maybe when the police show up to deal with the collision your daughter caused, you should I dunno, maybe not let her smoke in front of the police officer?"





Lady called 911 to report her purse had been stolen out of her car. I showed up and she admitted that she had left the car unlocked while she went into a store. Leaving her purse behind on the front seat. At least her car wasn't stolen; it would have been pretty easy since she had left the keys in the ignition. With the engine still running.





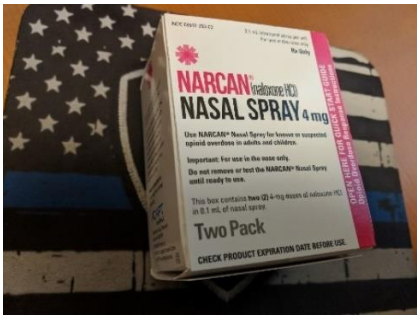
The motorcyclist who hit a bear in the road. I remember it was in a September; the bear had been gorging on blackberries and when the bike hit the bear it knocked the shit out of the bear. Literally. Purple berry bear shit all over the bike and road. The bear had ran off. Purple shit just everywhere though.

I was at a police training once, a special course about how to conduct comprehensive background checks on police applicants. Or in my case, since I was in charge of the volunteer reserve officers, how to screen potential volunteer officer candidates. The instructor started talking about these two brand new websites that could yield some information. The term "social media" had not been invented yet, so he just told us to check out these sites call "My Space" and "Facebook." Those two were so new, that was the first time I had ever heard of either of them. So at his instruction I dutifully wrote down "check out: http://www.MYSPACE.com and http://www.FACEBOOK.com."





Woman comes to front police counter to file a complaint. She had gone to a local restaurant with her 7 year old daughter. Found a nice table outside by the waterfront. The restaurant owner's dog – a large old golden retriever – took a liking to the girl and knocked her down while humping her. Woman was very upset. It was one of the few times in my career when I laughed out loud when I shouldn't have. The woman was, uh, more upset when I laughed. When I went to talk to the dog's owner at her insistence, he laughed, too.






About 15 years before I started my career in Poulsbo there was a little incident one night involving a Poulsbo Police Officer and a Kitsap County Sheriff's Deputy; they had gone to one of the local family restaurants in Poulsbo; a place called Henry's. The guy who owned it (yep, Henry) liked cops and he had told all the local LEO's that they could go into his place in the middle of the night and make themselves a sandwich if they wanted and leave a couple bucks in a jar. So it was common at 2 or 3 am to find a cop or two or three in there in the dark, because the place closed at like 9 or 10 pm. Keep in mind this was in the days when nothing was open at night, and there were no cell phones or internet invented and yes, the town got pretty damn quiet at night. Especially when it was raining. Anyway, one night, two of the officers there were practicing their quick-draw techniques to see who could get their revolver out of their belt holster the fastest. And in the spirit of the Old West classic duel; they faced each other about 20 feet apart. Well this one time, the Poulsbo cop neglected to take the bullets out of his gun first, and his aim was unfortunately right on, and his finger was on the trigger and he pulled the trigger and he shot the KCSO deputy and paralyzed him for the rest of his life. The PPD cop lost his job of course and although he stayed in Poulsbo he became a full time alcoholic and died in his 60's. Fortunately, I never saw or heard of any of my contemporaries every doing anything even half that stupid. By the way, for somebody to get accidentally shot, at least two of the inviolate firearms safety rules would have to be broken; you can't do it by breaking just one rule.



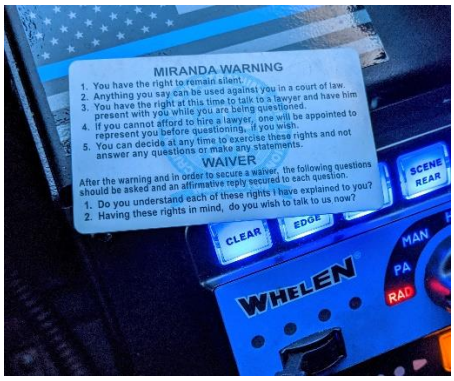




Disheveled, smelly, mentally ill homeless cat lady, living downtown, was shlepping around 3 poor cats in a couple of cat carriers. I called Animal Control and using a combination of sweet talk and coercion, we talked the woman out of her cats, so they could go live normal cat lives somewhere else. I was feeling pretty good about the outcome. The next morning, the homeless woman was back in our police station lobby, holding a 4th fucking cat she had found somewhere after we had de-catted her just the day before. Animal control then took that one away, too. That woman was like a cat magnet. Or a cat snatcher. Or both.







A citizen reported finding some bones in the dirt. Bones that looked suspiciously human. I went to the scene; a dirt embankment overlooking the bay, in a city park. Erosion had exposed a few bones that we then dug out; they had clearly been there for years and years. I sent the bones off to a medical examiner at the University of Washington who specialized in old bones. It was determined the bones were definitely human and had indeed been in the dirt for around a 100 years old. Nobody could determine the race, and the bones were kept in a drawer at the U of W until about 20 years later when some researchers came back making inquiries. Fortunately for them I was on duty that day and was able to show them the exact location. They determined the dirt was not a burial site; the dirt had been moved from somewhere else and the bones had been included when the dirt was dumped there.







Store security guard caught a shoplifter. The shoplifter didn't want to get caught so he ran out of the store, chased by security guard. The thief ran into the woods and got away. Police get called. I look around a bit in the woods but the guy is gone. Then a helpful citizen tells us that the she had seen that guy when he had arrived, and she pointed out his truck to us. Turns out the registered owner of the car was, yep, the suspect. Here's the best part; the thief had left his keys in the ignition, and the doors were unlocked. The security guard wanted me to get into the truck but legally I couldn't. But I suggested that if he, as an agent and goodwill ambassador of the store, wanted to take the keys for safekeeping into his office, he could do that. Because there were criminals running around! You can't just leave some poor customer's car keys all vulnerable like that in a car! So the guard eagerly took them, and then locked the car to keep it safe. I helpfully gave him the phone number for the owner, and the guard left him a fabulous message, letting him know that hey, he's got his keys safe in his office, and he can come get them anytime.

911 dispatcher sends me a call at midnight: a millennial is hella upset that his wife is still smoking cigarettes, 3 months pregnant and all. I pointed out to him that I, as a police officer, specialized pretty much only in crimes and criminal activities and abhorrent as it sounded, his problem did not quite fit the parameters for a police response, so he was going to have to figure out how to deal with that himself.







I was on patrol, with another officer in my passenger seat. At a 4-way stop intersection we see a young man on a motorcycle across from us come up to a stop, and because he had a passenger riding on the back of his sport bike, his balance was a little off and he almost fell over. Definitely caught the attention of both of the police officers watching him; we instantly started thinking the chances were pretty high this guy was inexperienced, and probably not licensed to operate a motorcycle. So I changed my course and started following him. A block later he decided he did not want to meet any police officers that day, so he jerked the throttle back and took off, to try an escape and evade tactic. My response was lights and sirens and matching speed, but I quickly realized that his bike was considerably faster than my patrol car. A couple blocks later I terminated my pursuit and turned off the lights and siren, to the great disappointment of the other officer who wanted to keep chasing him. If the biker had been riding solo without his girlfriend hanging on for dear life on the back, I might have considered it. But I had determined that if I kept up the chase, the likelihood of him crashing spectacularly was pretty high, and his back seat rider probably did not deserve that risk. So they got away.





Guy calls 911 in a panic. His 2 year old son is missing. Broad daylight, calm weekend day. Cops show up, guy explains the kid either wandered off or somebody took him cause the kid is most definitely not there. More police show up and we start making plans about calling out a Search and Rescue team. In the middle of all this the guy's mother in law drives up. She tells us that she actually has the little tyke and he's fine. She took him because she had stopped by to visit and her son in law was passed out drunk with the kid playing in the living room. So she took him. We weren't mad at her at all; she done good.

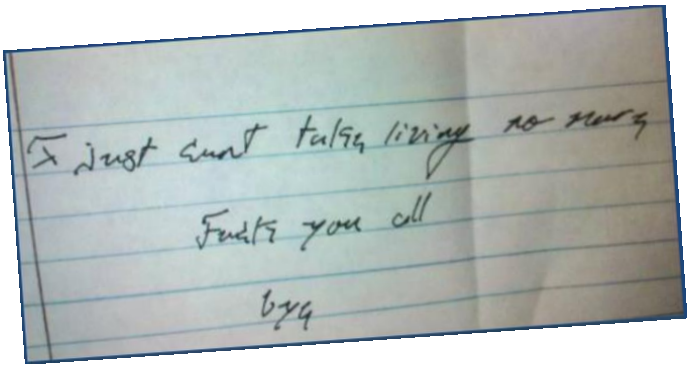


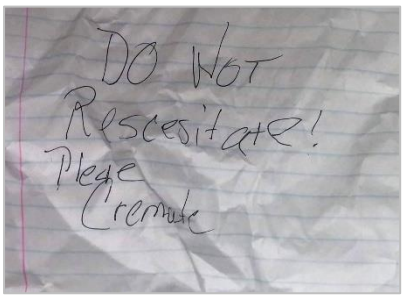


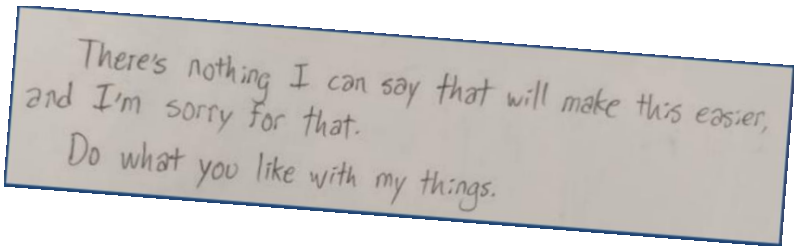


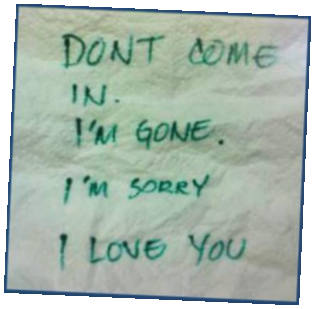
When I was really on top of my game – back in the days when I was pulling over 100+ drivers a month – I could notice when cars passing me had license plates that were different – meaning a front plate that was different than a rear plate. That takes concentration is ranked as Expert Level. And over the years, sometimes I pulled over more than one car at once; a handful of times three or four cars at one time, and my all-time record was nine at one time, for passing on the right on the shoulder.

Yep, here are some for-reals suicide notes left behind:









A nursing home health care working coming in to work at 3 am spots a prowler on the flat roof of a nearby strip mall of businesses; she calls 911 and I respond. The back of the building is built into a slope and it is possible to step up onto the roof, from the back. So there I am poking around on the roof, no prowler in sight but I do find a vent cover that has been removed and set aside, revealing an access hole down into one of the businesses below. The hole is not even 18" across, but room enough I guess for a skinny dude to slide down in there. And then I completely blow it – I literally yell out to the other officer on the other part of the roof "HEY CHECK THIS OUT I THINK THE GUY WENT DOWN THIS HOLE HERE!" (I had only been a cop for a couple years at that point so I was still kind of new is my excuse..) At that moment, I think the prowler (burglar, actually) had been carrying the safe from the insurance company toward the front door. I say that because we found the safe in the middle of the office on the floor. The other officer came over to the open vent in and just like me, was stupid about it and started aiming his flashlight down in there, which totally alerted the burglar. I walked over to the front part of the roof to peer down and try to see which business we were standing over. At that moment the burglar decided to leave the scene; the front door burst open directly underneath me and he ran straight out. I briefly considered jumping after him but I was about 11 feet off the ground so that would have been dumb. I stayed where I was and like a forward air controller, I vectored in the other incoming police units to set up a containment and corral the guy, who had run toward the nursing home. But he got away; we never found him. I later went into the business below and saw that he had dropped down through the shaft onto a file cabinet, and put one foot down right onto a blank sheet of paper. It had been a slightly misty foggy morning so his shoe had been a little wet, and grimy from the roof, and it could not have left a better footprint on the paper. It was just beautiful. Later one of the other officers said "I dunno, I just can't believe that guy got away. We set up a perimeter really fast. I think he's still hunkered down around here somewhere." I was skeptical. "The K9 worked the shit out of this area and cleared it – the guy is long gone." The other officer was not convinced. "I'm gonna go poke around, anyway." About two minutes later on the radio: "I got him hiding in the bushes here; he's not getting away this time I got him at gunpoint!" The burglar was taken into custody and I took his shoes off to compare to my shoeprint on the paper. Perfect match. Case closed. He was charged, convicted, and sentenced to a whole 7 months in jail. Even though he had an established criminal history of similar offenses in another county..only 7 months. In fact he already had the moniker of "The Rooftop Burglar." Actually he only did 5 months in lock up- he got two months off for good behavior. Then he went right back to his old ways and burglarized some more businesses. (And yes, the police tracking dog on duty that night certainly did screw up that track; the dog actually went right past the guy a couple times, only a few feet away but never homed in on him.) Anyway, 5 months in jail.



Me, in a house, lecturing the grown man with brain damage from an old motorcycle accident, that inviting an 11 year neighbor boy into his room to look at his old trophy collection is just not cool. His uptight super religious old mother glared at me. "You know what the biggest problem is in this world today?" She asked. I said "uh.." and before I could offer any guesses she and her brain damaged son yelled at me in unison: "SATAN!"






One night I caught a drunk driver. I brought him back to the police station and processed him, which included a very lengthy form with a million questions. After I got all done with everything and released the guy to his wife to take him home, I realized that I could not find the form. Which I had left with him unattended for a few minutes at one point... The other officer on duty went to the guy's house and found the form on his living room table, and brought it back to me. If that guy were to be charged with stealing my paperwork, I think the most appropriate citation would have been "Obstructing a Law enforcement Officer." Boy was I relieved to get it back, and that guy was pretty stupid for not just burning into ashes the second he got home. Or at least throw it in the trash. We gave him a break though and didn't add the extra charge for stealing the police forms.





A woman caught her neighbor's Great Dane outside the fence out in the street, so she helpfully grabbed the dog and brought it back. The other dog still in the yard noticed how the escaped dog was brought back, tail between his legs. Other dog, a pitbull, decided the woman should be punished for making the first dog feel bad. So with her ankle, the mauling started. Another neighbor was able to fight off the pitbull and an ambulance was called. I stepped out of the ambulance after seeing enough of a very-chewed-up bloody ankle and the owner of the two dogs then came home. Owner asked what was going on. I pointed to the mass of blood on the ground just inside her gate. "Your pitbull just attacked one of your neighbors." Owner said "Oh." And then she walked into her house, nbd, whatevs.

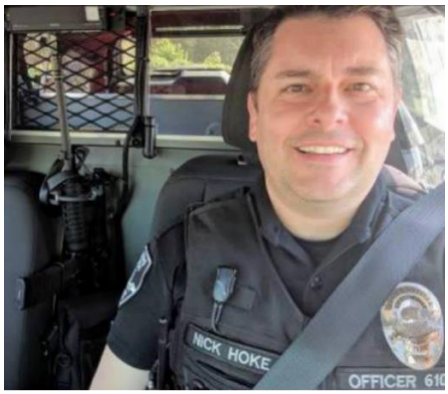




I pulled over a guy with a really weird looking license plate. Turns out it was on backwards. Not upside down..it was mounted backwards. Face-in. Bare metal backside facing out. Because the owner was making a statement against the government, protesting paying for expensive license plates fees, so he intentionally put the new plate on the front of his pickup truck...back side out. I figured I would help make his protest statement even more powerful by giving him a big ticket, of course. I still smile when I think about how he undoubtedly complained to his family and friends about that and what their reactions must have been: "No way! The cop gave you ticket for that?!?"

I've got a law breaker in custody, the scene is chaotic and dynamic and I realize that I just jumbled up the Miranda Warning to him. Not a big deal, since a criminal justice researcher had once counted no less than 132 different versions across the country; slight variations existed amongst federal and state agencies, municipal, county, tribal; the was no exact national standard.







Normal-looking but kind of mentally ill guy, about 55 years old, is out wandering around at night; he had gotten kicked out of his sister's apartment after she got a court order signed by a judge so he was kind of homeless. He found an unlocked door at a dentist office and was hanging out in there when the motion sensor alarm went off. As a matter of routine, the alarm company called in to see if it was an employee. The idiot not only answers the phone, but he gives the alarm company operator his real name when asked. The police show up and arrest him. The next morning, the restaurant owner next door called 911 to report a burglar had been in their place during the night, and although they didn't have an alarm system, they did get him on video. It was of course the same moron, right before he found the dentist office unlocked and went in there. I make the restaurant owner feel better when I tell him the guy is already in jail. While he was in there – the restaurant – he had helped himself to some food (showed up clearly on video) which elevated his crime from a simple trespass to a burglary. The legal definition of burglary being; in a place where you're trespassing, AND committing a crime while in there. (So for you law students out there- his being in the dentist was just a simple trespass, since he committed no (other) crimes). But it gets a little better: the moron had gotten stuck in an elevator while in the restaurant. Literally stuck. So he had hit the emergency button in the cab, which went straight to the elevator company. They asked his name, he of course gave them his real name, and they sent out a technician to free him. Local elevator repair guy showed up – at midnight – and got the guy out. The tech went to go check the elevator control panel and the burglar ran away. But just to the dentist office next door where he got caught a short time later. A few days later the restaurant got a service bill from the elevator company, with itemized line items for "travel extra work outside the contract overtime" at $636.23 in .75 increments. The total bill to get the burglar out of their elevator at midnight was $2,773.96.





A shirtless man is having a psychotic break and he's running around crazy in an apartment complex parking lot. I arrive on the scene and he takes one look at me and starts running faster. He runs downhill and I radio the other responding officer that the guy is headed his way. The shirtless crazy guy (about 27 years old) runs down an embankment and gets to a retention pond that is alongside the road; basically a giant ditch with some marshy reedy plants growing in it. Dude either slips in the wet (it was raining) grass or he intentionally does a header; either way he literally dives right into the water, goes all the way in and under, and then comes up on the other side of the edge by the road. We catch and him and he is done running and now very cold; the diving in the ditch move really put out the steam in him. We talk to him and it's clear he's in what could call an altered mental state; he can't remember who he is, where he lives, why he's running around with no shirt, where he's going, or what his story is. The tats on his chest show he's an army vet, with some time in over in the middle east. I guess something happened over that messed him up. The only questions of mine that he can answer are "Has this happened before?" (yes) "Were you transported to the hospital for a mental evaluation?" (yes) and "Okay, would you like to be seen again today?" (yes). So he willingly gets into an aid car and the EMT's take him to the hospital. We felt kind of bad for that guy. That was the last I ever saw of him; I never found out what his story was or where he lived.

Woman shopping in a thrift store set her purse on a shelf to try on some shoes. Forgot about her purse for just a moment and wandered one aisle over. Just long enough for a thief – a perfectly normal-looking/non-criminal looking woman- to swoop in on the purse, snatch it up, and take it away. We know this is what happened because it showed up on the surveillance recordings very clearly. I suggested to the thrift store folks that the video would look great on facebook. They agreed. By lunch the next day the woman was identified. By the end of the day she came forward with some kind of lame excuse about how it was not a theft at all, I mean she could see how it might look like one, but it wasn't really…I don't know if she got prosecuted but I do know several hundred people (at least) on facebook got a good look at her face and then her name, which I felt was a pretty good punishment in and of itself.



A lady called 911 to report a parking violation in her neighborhood. I show up, reluctantly. It's in a new neighborhood and most of the houses are complete. The offending vehicle is a gutter installing truck; the guy is forming out 20 foot long sections and the only place he could park was half on a sidewalk. Which really upset this lady because she had got a ticket the week earlier for parking on a sidewalk or too close to a hydrant I don't know, and I told her I wasn't going to write the guy a ticket because it's not like he parked his car and walked away for day; he's right there, doing his job, and he'll be done in a couple of hours. Complainant was insistent that I enforce the law! And write him a ticket! I refused! And I still don't feel bad about that!







One of the huffers I had caught and referred to the prosecutor for a criminal charge did indeed get charged with a crime, and a court date was set. The huffer failed to show up for her court date, and so a warrant was issued. She got caught after that and agreed to make it to the next court date so the warrant was quashed and her name put back on the docket for the next court date. Which she missed. So another warrant was issued. I can't remember if it was the 2nd or 3rd Failure to Appear but the judge got frustrated with her pretty quickly and raised the bail amount to a whopping $50,000..for a simple misdemeanor charge she didn't want to resolve.





Minor car crash in the middle of an intersection. No traffic lights, just 4 stop signs. Two drivers had approached the intersection at the same time, at a right angle to each other, and both of them somehow proceeded into the intersection without seeing each other until they ran into each other. I was not impressed with either of them.





Me, in the living room of a run-down mobile home in a trailer park. I can't remember what the homeowner had called for that I was there, but I got all distracted by the rotten roof. The roof is so rotten that there is an actual hole in the middle of the ceiling, where daylight is clearly visible. The hole is about the size of a basketball. The homeowner had put a bucket in the floor to catch the rainwater when it rained. It was interesting.



Dude was driving to wedding. Driving too fast. He was the Best Man and I guess he was running late, doing about 90 mph in his Honda Civic on the highway when he lost control and hit a median embankment surrounding an overpass support column. He turned it into a ramp and it sent him flying over the oncoming traffic, Dukes of Hazzard style. A shaken witness told me a couple minutes later "That car went flying right over me; dropping all kinds of gravel and rocks and dirt onto my car!" An airlift medical helicopter dropped down directly onto the highway to load up the driver, who had sustained a major head injury when his car crashed into the ground. The damage to his brain turned out to be permanent, I found out a few years later.







Old man suicided himself in his garage. In his car. Turned on the engine and gassed himself to death. Which is actually not a bad way to do it, you just have to be sure nobody stops you between the time you fall asleep and the time you die, because irreversible brain damage starts somewhere in there before the dying part starts. First thing I did when I got there was turn off the furnace/fan unit, which was in the garage. The exhaust gas was long gone, but it had been replaced with a funky dead guy smell and we didn't need that to get circulated through the house. It was a memorable scene because the old guy had also decided to take his old German Shepherd dog out with him, in the passenger seat. That was a little different.





Woman called 911 to report her ex-husband was supposed to receive their kid she was dropping off at his house for his regularly scheduled visitation. But there was no answer at his phone or door, and she was worried that something had happened to him, especially since his dog was found loose running around the neighborhood. A reserve officer and myself get dispatched. We talk to the woman out front, agree it's suspicious, and agree to go into his house and check things out. We find a back door open and can hear a very loud stereo blasting upstairs, but nobody is home. We search every room anyway, starting with the first floor and working our way up. We check all the bedrooms; all empty - and find ourselves eventually at the master bedroom door. The music is blaring in there, and we've convinced each other by then that the dude is dead in there. We open the door. He's on the bed but he is not dead. He is very much alive. Banging his girlfriend in bed.







Police get called one night to stop what looks like a car theft attempt in progress, or maybe a car prowl. I arrive on the scene in a church parking lot and confront a group of teen boys who explain they were just good-naturedly messing with their youth pastor's car; it was a little Kia and it was so small they were able to pick it up and rotate it in place. The funny part though was that the car was so small (and cheap) that when they picked it up it got torqued and twisted enough that the back window frame got bent and blew out the back window glass. Darnit.







8 am; I get dispatched to a bank alarm. The bank was not open for the day yet so wasn't too concerned. The alarm trip was caused by a loose balloon floating around in the break room. After I got there, a bank employee responded to shut off the alarm. She got all flustered because she wasn't sure if she had right code or not to deactivate the alarm system so she called for her manager to come in a bit early and turn it off, so while we were waiting for the manager I stared at the teller. Finally asked her "Uh, what happens if you type in the wrong code?" She said "Well, the alarm company would call the police!"

Me, in the patrol officer's squad room office complaining about the old woman who had just called 911 for a police response regarding an Important Safety Issue. She had called to report the large white painted arrows on the pavement - the ones showing drivers which way to go – those arrows were getting faded. The ones in the post office parking lot. So sooner or later somebody was going to not see those arrows and then there would certainly be an accident in the post office parking lot, officer. She wanted me to Do Something About That. My response was to complain to my coworker, who quickly changed my perspective: "Dude, if this is the worst thing we have to deal with today, then it's a pretty good shift. Things could be like a thousand times worse than this you know," and I had to immediately agree with him; Lord knows how many cops that day across the country were dealing with homicides and suicides and all sort of horrible violent crimes against innocent people…yeah….a call about faded arrows in the post office parking lot was definitely not worthy enough for me to complain about!





I get dispatched to an apparently suicidal guy running around in traffic. When I find him he's actually laying down in the middle of a busy street; cars are swerving around him, thwarting his attempt to die. When I get close to him he wants no part of me so he starts running, hoping maybe a passing motorist will take him out. I have to get another officer to me help me tackle him and keep him safe from himself.





I pulled over a teen girl for a traffic violation; I can't remember what but I do remember the second she handed me her drivers license I just froze when I saw it. Because back in those days, the Washington State Department of Licensing made up drivers license numbers with a combination of letters and numbers, and the first letters were always the first 5 of the last name, then 2 letters for first name and then middle initial. This poor girl, whose last name was Fagan, had a first name of Alyssa and then a middle name that started with an L. Which meant her DOL # was FAGANAL followed by some random numbers. I felt so bad for her!









Woman is walking into a store and suddenly her infant that she's carrying in her arms starts hollering and crying. Because a rock hit his head. Not thrown by a person; it was a stupid seagull flying overhead that dropped it. Bird thought was hoping it was a clam to break open when dropped from a height. Bird was wrong. So I guess you can add to your list of random things to worry about: Seagulls dropping rocks on yo head.





Me, at an air ambulance landing zone in a large field; somebody is getting a medical airlift for some kind of traumatic injury; I can't remember what exactly. I do remember it was a hot August; very dry. The patient is loaded in, the engine starts, the rotors turn, n and the helicopter slowly lifts, kicking up a huge swirling mess of dried grass and dust. I'm smart enough to stand behind a large firetruck so I don't get hit with all the debris stirred up by the rotors, but not smart enough to notice until too late that I had kept all of my nearby patrol vehicle windows all the way open.







A school teacher at a church's private school calls 911 one day after class. I show up. She explains she feels like her super crazy ex-boyfriend, the Super Stalker, has maybe found out where's she moved to for like the third time and where she's working now, and he paid his friend to drive up to the church and talk to the woman for bit, which freaked her out like you can't imagine. Memorable for me because of the way the woman was talking to me; it led me to believe that she was desperately looking for a nice police officer man, like the one standing in front of her, to go way above and beyond and take a great interest in her case and really look out for her. I'm pretty sure she was really hoping that I would fall for her and choose to be her rescuer, and she could get my cell phone number and I'd be agreeable to stopping by her house at any time on or off duty to keep her safe from her Super Stalker. Even if had been single I would never in a million years consider that as a tempting option. I'm pretty sure any guy she snagged would have to deal with a massive amount of drama with the Super Stalker; the two of them were still very much a package deal. I pretty much got away from her as quick as I could. That was not the first time something like that happened to me. Or the last.





Old guy in his 80's had a clogged toilet in his basement. Plumber came out and said it was the outside line that needed to be dug up; it was a very old pipe and had failed. Old guy looked at the bill and said "fuck that" and got to digging himself. It was a very hot summer day and he was not able to finish the job; he had a heart attack and died. We could see where he had dropped his shovel, went for but then dropped his cigarettes and lighter, and then died on the way to the phone in his kitchen. Faithful dog by his side. He should have just paid that have that trench dug. The history with the cigarettes didn't help either.

Fast forward about 20 years and I'm at some official business again in that neighborhood, and I meet the latest newest owners of that old farmhouse where the guy had died. I casually mentioned his tragic death and the young couple are like "Wait, what?!?" and I realized that nobody had ever informed them that somebody had died in their front yard years ago.





Explosion in the closet of an apartment duplex; 2nd floor. No fire, but the roof had been blown up and off a bit, leaving it askew. Turned out to be a very, very large firework comparable to a small stick of TNT; legal only on the Indian reservation, where it was bought. But the responding police and fire department crews thought it was a meth lab explosion; which made it really funny when my sergeant and the fire Marshall convinced themselves and each other that they had gone in there and been exposed to a deadly meth lab and therefore their respiratory distress was logical and expected and if they lived long enough, there would be a claim filed with the state because they were exposed to cancer-causing chemicals whilst on the job and oh…wait it was just some gunpowder, never mind. They both miraculously recovered very quickly after learning that.



Shoplifter ran out of WalMart. The loss prevention associate watching him called 911. I called him back. He told me that he saw the suspect run into a nearby business. The suspect was black. Which for this story, is very relevant. I go into the business, see the guy, and he admitted to me that he had just left the WalMart, so I figure I got the right guy and I detained him in handcuffs and take him out to my car despite his protests. The loss prevention associate came over, looked into the back seat of my car and said "Uh…, that's not the guy!" The thief ran into THAT business!" and he pointed one door over. The doors were really close together so that was an honest mistake on his part. Another officer on the scene went into the other business, found the other black gentleman that we had in town that day, and arrested him, because that was indeed the actual suspect. I could not get my guy out of handcuffs fast enough. Fortunately the other officer smoothed things out with him, it helped I think that the officer was black himself. I will admit…uh…that when the loss prevention officer was talking to me on the phone, he said something like "The suspect is a black male, 5 foot 9, wearing blue jeans and.." At which point I cut him off and said the regrettable words "I don't care what he's wearing, I'm just going to grab the first black guy I see over there," …figuring.. of course….(quite wrongly) that there would be only one black guy over there at that time. To my credit, I did at least ask him if he had just left the WalMart, and he had told me that he had indeed been over there, so that's my defense that it sure looked like I had a good enough reason to detain him in cuffs at that moment. But yeah, I still do feel a little bad about that whole thing.







Parking lot under-construction scene: a large utility hole in the ground had some rental barricades around it. The barricades got stolen. By another general contractor, who needed to close off HIS hole in the ground nearby at another construction site. I found him and he admitted taking the barricades. Because, you know, he had a hole in the ground he needed to keep safe. He got charged with theft. Twenty years later, he ran for mayor. He did not get my vote. He got like hardly any votes, actually.



Lady was in a tanning salon. She got out of the tanning bed and while putting on her clothes, she spotted a cell phone on the floor looking up at her; lens side up. Ladies: If you ever see a phone like that aimed at you, follow these instructions: 1: grab phone, 2: then scream. Must be in that order. Because if you scream first, a hand will appear in the gap under the floor partitions and snatch the phone back. Also, if the perv runs out the tanning salon right after that, it is permissible to yell at the front counter girl that a pervert is running out the door. Otherwise he'll get away. But I eventually caught him. He was like 60 years old; most likely hoping to get a video of a woman younger than 57, which is what he got. He made up some story to his wife about how his phone fell on the floor and he didn't actually mean to take a video of the woman in the booth next to him.



I'm at my home, and the doorbell rings. I peer out the peephole. Some guy trying to sell magazines has decided the "no solicitors" sign on my door doesn't apply to him. I open the door and he is so shocked to see a uniformed police officer suddenly in the doorway that he gasps and steps back. I don't say a word, I just point to the sign. He quickly turns and leaves.

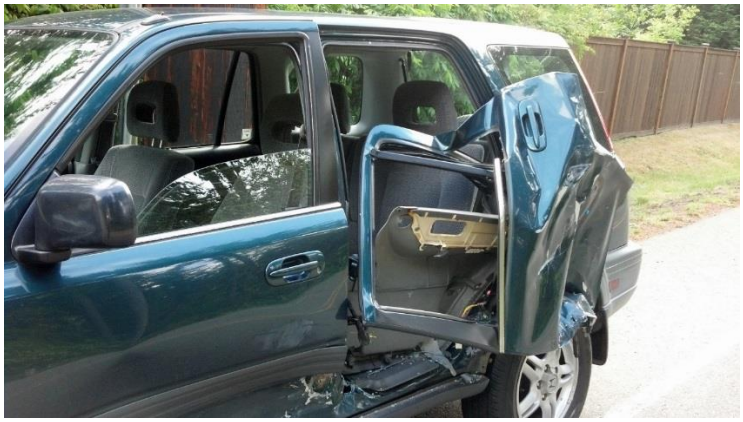
Guy who lives on the corner of a busy residential intersection gets fed up with all the cars running the stop signs. Complains about it enough to the police chief so Officer Hoke is dispatched to go work traffic there for a few hours. Officer Hoke stations himself next to the guy's driveway, and pulls over an impressive number of violators. Next day, the guy is mad now because he didn't see the police officer actually pull anybody over. We had to explain the obvious to him; everybody who got stopped was stopped about a block away on each of the four streets involved; nobody was stopped of course in the middle of the intersection. Which I guess is what the guy was totally expecting to see.





When I first started my job in 1993, the traffic fine was only $37 dollars for just about every offense. Over the years the state lawmakers added extra amounts to fund special state projects, and there was general inflation, and eventually the standard ticket penalty amount increased to a whopping $136 dollars. It used to be a LOT easier to issue tickets to people when the fine was only $37.





Husband and wife reported their teenage daughter had run away from home again. They thought she was at her boyfriend's house up the street and had been there all weekend. I asked them if they had bothered to go there and get her themselves and they said they hadn't. The dad then adds "To be honest officer, I don't care enough to go look for her myself or make any calls to try and find her."







Manager of motel called 911 to report a guest had checked out and left behind, uh, 3 pounds of marijuana. This was years ago when having 3 pounds was super illegal. Actually having 3 grams would have been illegal as hell. I showed up, confiscated the impressive 3 pounds of dope, and then a short time later the owner actually came to the PD to claim it. He said he had not actually checked out and he wanted his 3 pounds of Medicinal Marijuana back. Although his medical marijuana card had expired and technically was not valid, the prosecutor told me to just release it all back to him; no charges were filed.

Police dispatcher reported a 911-hangup call at a residence. No response on call back. Is it a problem, or is it a malfunctioning phone? 99% of the time it's a malfunctioning phone. I dutifully head over to the house, presuming it's a malfunctioning phone but instead I find two drunk angry people, and a smashed phone on the ground, in pieces. Yep, it's a for-reals 911 call because of a domestic dispute. The offender was an off-duty Seattle police officer, who happened to live in Poulsbo. My sergeant then called his sergeant. Offender/SPD Officer got in a LOT of trouble with everybody, starting pretty much immediately at that point.







Guy driving a little Honda Civic learned the hard way – but too late- that the "E Brake" also makes a great parking brake. His car, with no brake on, rolled backward from the mailboxes at the top of the hill of his apartment complex; the car went down into the parking lot, hit a railing, and went through it. The railing though had been strong enough to kill about 90% of the car's momentum; so it did not go over the edge of the parking lot down into the apartment 8 feet below that. The car wound up balanced -precariously but perfectly– on a concrete lip of an edge; one half of the car was a foot above the parking lot, and the other half was dangling in the air 8 feet above the ground and 13 feet from somebody's kitchen window.



I called for a tow truck to come get the car (yeah, same story here, continued..) and the tow truck driver missed the driveway, went too far to the dead end road, and in an effort to turn around his giant flatbed truck, he backed into and took out a wooden house fence. Which I thought was pretty funny but then it got even better when he tried to drive his truck down the steep driveway to the dangling car and the exposed drive shaft of the flatbed tow truck hit the grade and broke off at the mid-point coupling. Then the driver tried to go forward to get out of there but the drive shaft, connected at the rear axle and not connected in the middle anymore, got wedged into the pavement and totally jammed up the whole truck. The poor tow truck driver, a young guy, was really not happy as he was desperately banging on the driveshaft with a sledgehammer, looked up, and saw me snapping away with my camera. It took another tow truck of course to unfuck that situation. The Honda driver felt a little better, that he wasn't the only dumbass there that day. Sadly I lost those hilarious photos.





Grocery store manager calls the police for advice. I call him back and he said he had caught a shoplifter. Guy had stolen a sandwich. Sandwich thief turned out to be one of our long time local, uh, private attorneys who had a business nearby. Grocery store owner decided to just make the lawyer pay for it and call it even, with no further police involvement. If you were a local resident and I divulged the name of the lawyer, you'd be quite surprised.







Bored 17 year old kid, driving around at 2 am with his friend, ringing doorbells and running away. (This was before the internet was invented). After several confused and highly bothered citizens call 911, I caught those darn rascals and put an end to their fun. I read them the riot act and point out that if they kept at it, sooner or later somebody is going to answer their door with a gun. The kid's dad is a state trooper. I do a catch and release on the kid and tell him to have his dad call me ASAP. Trooper dad never called me but he did write a letter of complaint to my chief, complaining that I had scared his kid and was rude to him. I pointed out to my chief that in addition to the disturbing the peace charge that I did NOT file on the teen, I also let him off the hook for violating his intermediate drivers license status on two counts: 1) driving at 2 am and 2) driving with another teen in the car. So it seemed to me that I went pretty easy on the kid and he had no grounds to whine about anything, and in lieu of some tickets, a good yelling-at was an equitable substitute. My chief agreed with me.





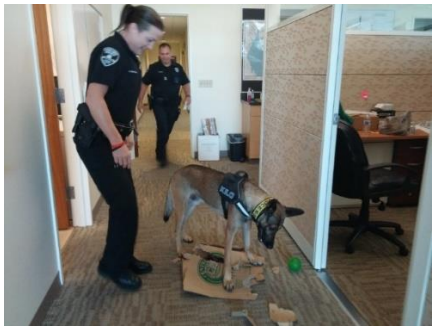


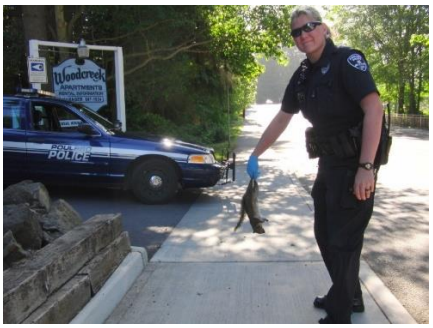
911 call: missing girl. Elementary school age. Parents were getting ready to take her to school, turn around for a moment and she's gone from the house. Police are called. Girl can't be found. More police are called. About 20 minutes later we found the girl, hiding between some arborvitae trees by the street right in front of her house. She was wearing school colors; dark forest green, so she blended in pretty well. She just didn't want to go to school that day.



The paramedic stepped out of the aid car and briefed me on the patient inside. She was unconscious with a major head injury. Bad car accident. He looked at me and said "The back of her skull is just..all..squishy.." Yeah...she died.

Lady lost control of her SUV and rolled it at high speed onto its side on Fjord Drive; blowing out most of the windows and sending the contents of the vehicle out all over the street like a yard sale. She was on a little too many prescription pills. It was the wife of one my coworkers, who was on duty at that time. She was really, really, lucky she didn't go off the embankment down into the bay and into the water.





Same woman – wife of one of my fellow patrol officers – lost control of her other car and drove it deep into the woods. The car was found in the early morning hours, with the keys and purse still in there, but she was long gone. She tried telling us that what happened was, that, well, there was this bear! And it had run out into the road in front of her! And so she had to swerve, and wound up, yeah, driving about a 100 feet off the road into the woods, fortunately not hitting a single tree. She could not explain why she then ran home a couple miles away, leaving behind her purse and keys in the car. Her story: Not Believable.





I find myself participating in a multi-agency emergency police response to a house where somebody inside is claiming a gunman has just burst in and killed several people, and the caller is hiding in a closet. It sounds like complete BS. It sounds like a "SWATing" call. But we're quite obligated to swarm the area and call out the people in the house, who of course are all fine, had no clue what was going on, and were shitting to see police officers everywhere – some up close and personal and others peering from around other nearby houses and cars, all with their rifles out, surrounding their house. The teen girl inside was a live-stream gaming personality on a popular channel, which made her a target that day for some reason. Whomever called in that BS police call was no doubt disappointed we hadn't kicked in the doors with flash bang grenades and pointed our guns at everybody in the house with her webcam catching all the action.






A woman died in her house. Nothing suspicious; she was old and dying. Her younger neighbor had found her, the day after Thanksgiving. She was distraught. I told her that she was in luck, so to speak, because I had the fire department's new chaplain with me at that moment; he was on a ride along. We both turned to the chaplain and for some reason he was not in chaplain mode and could not turn it on for a very long moment; he looked like a deer in headlights. It was actually quite funny and I laughed about that to him for years afterward.

3 am: On patrol duty. 10 hour shift. 6 hours down, 4 more to go. It would probably be easier to stay awake if I drank coffee like every other non-mormon cop in the world, but I don't like the taste of coffee, so I never drank it.



Repo man shows up to hook a car; the owner was delinquent on the payments and so the bank wanted their car back. The repo man had a sneaky big pickup truck with a hidden car tow contraption thing under the back. He went to the house, backed up to the van that needed to be snagged, and deployed the tow bar thing that extended out the back and grabbed the tires. At that moment the home owner/debtor ran out and, seeing what was happening, jumped into the van. Turned it on, and put it in gear. The repo man had already grabbed onto the back end of it and lifted it up, and put his truck in gear to get out of there. Later upon questioning, he told us that he did not know that the car owner was in the van and had started it up. We did not believe that. You might wonder which vehicle won the tug of war- the pickup truck towing the van, or the front wheel drive van with its back half in the air? The truck won. Off it went down the road, with the van owner spinning the front tires futility, getting dragged backward. The van owner's brother, seeing this go down, decided to get in on the act. He jumped into his car and gave chase. A block later he rammed his car into the repo man's truck and all 3 cars got tangled up sideways in the road. Boy was that a mess; three guys yelling at each other, van tire spin marks going back several hundred feet, a pickup truck with half the van in the air, all three crooked in the road; it took me quite awhile to take it all in and try to figure it out. And nearby residents came out, telling us how loud it had been. The best part though was that it had started out in the county jurisdiction, and the crashing part ended just before the city limits, so it was up to the sheriff's deputies to do all the paperwork.



Middle school kid in detention in the school's main office got mad and kicked a hole in the wall. The police were called (that's me!) to file a report. I looked at the hole, asked the kid if he did that, and he said yeah. Easy report. File went to juvenile prosecutors' office for charging. Then the mother got involved. Got super pissed that her little angel was being harrassed by the school. She filed a federal lawsuit aginst the middle school principal, the school district superintendent, the school board, and because the police got involved, she added my name, the police chief, the mayor, and the city council members. Like, wow, man. I very quickly realized that if I were ever going to get a big lawsuit filed with name in it, this would probably be the best case to go with. Of course the lawsuit didn't go anywhere; it was dismissed pretty quickly.





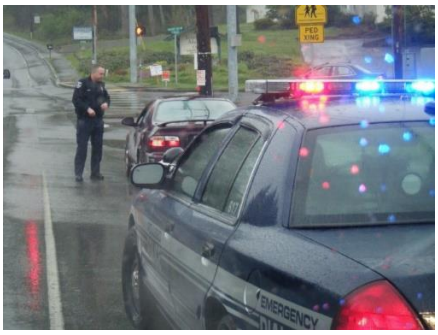
Aid call to a local motel: a guest had checked in but not checked out. He was not dead though; just messed up. He had been in an MMA cage fight at the casino, took at least one hit to the head from a knee, and lost the fight. Somehow he got back to the motel where his handlers I guess forgot about him. Two days later, brain damage was well underway. He got an airlift flight to Harborview. Considering his fight money awarded was only $1,000, he was going to have to come up with another $19,000 or so just to pay for the helicopter ride. That of course was just the start; the hospital ICU costs average around $1,000 per hour.



Old farmhouse on acreage. The city bought the property, to use as a park. Between the buying of the property and the making of it into a park, the city rented out the house and barn for people to live in. Renters decided it was a perfect place to start a marijuana grow op. Yes; highly illegal. Eventually the police found out about it and busted them. There were so many marijuana plants that had been gathered up that a week later when I checked on the place, there were still leaves scattered about all over the ground. A year or so later some wire thieves stripped all the copper out of the house and pretty much ruined it, so it got boarded up after that.



Serial Purse Snatcher! The suspect's MO is to stalk little old ladies in grocery stores – Literally: Little. Old. Ladies. – who each made the naïve mistake of walking a bit too far away from their purses in their shopping carts. That guy stole at least a half dozen purses within a month at our local grocery stores. Maybe more; not all of his clients were identified by us. No doubt at least some of them, seeing the space where they thought their purse should be, concluded that they had lost it themselves and didn't ever suspect it was the work of a thief. The suspect did show up on the stores' surveillance recordings; he wore the same red shoes every time. Man that guy made me really mad. I wanted to kick his ass, badly. When he was spotted in the Suquamish Casino, he ran out toward Bainbridge Island via the bridge, on foot. Multiple responding officers caught him literally midspan on the bridge, and he went to jail. That the best part of the whole case, because he made a deal to plead guilty and his sentence was only like 3 months. Which made me mad. At least I was by then, used to being disappointed by the criminal justice system.





Out of control car took out a couple of garbage bins set out on the curb in front of some houses for pickup. I'm out there, talking to the owners of the bins. I can't remember if the car was still there, or down the street, or long gone. The only thing I could remember is that one the garbage bins had its contents exploded all over the neighbors front yard; in this embarrassing case it was several dozen adult-sized used Depends.






I pulled over a woman for speeding; righteously 55+ in a 35 zone. It became clear to me within a few moments that she was seriously mentally ill, as she explained she was simply trying to get away from all of the red cars that were stalking her.



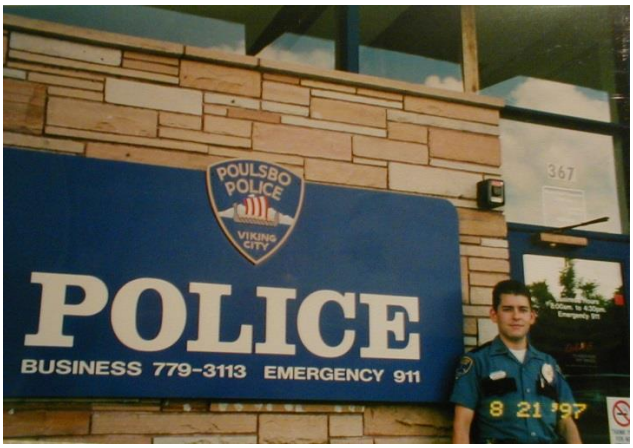
Flyers got posted up throughout the shopping center, stating that a jewelry store employee was being accused of attempted rape. The jewelry store owner is upset about the flyer. I contacted the man who had posted the flyers; he pointed out how he had very carefully worded everything and could not held liable for any libel. He explained that the 50 year old suspect had been at a party of mostly teenagers, had got drunk, and tried to rape a girl. The other party goers beat the shit of the guy, the police were called and the man was booked in the jail. And then his boss man/jewelry store owner quickly bailed him out, angering everybody. Including myself.

Some lady called 911 to report a white van in a grocery store parking lot looked like the kind of a van that somebody could get abducted in.





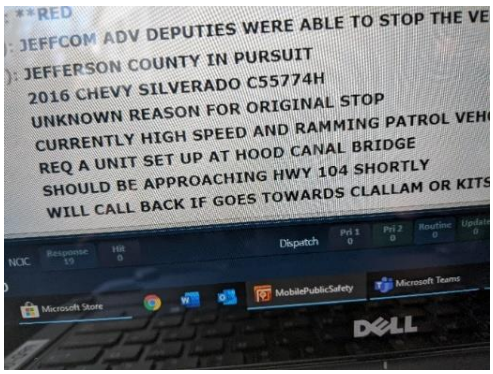
Guy in a ratty old Suburban is towing an equally ratty old motorhome trailer; as he goes downhill on a very busy road he realizes the trailer brakes are kaput; the trailer winds up pushing his truck sideways and everything then goes sideways, and both truck and trailer end up lodged between the guardrails on both sides of the two lane road, completely blocking 100% of both lanes. No injuries and no other vehicles were taken out in the process. Road was closed about 2 hours and I had to detour a lot of folks. About every 100th car stopped in the middle of my intersection: "excuse me officer, I need to go that way." THE ROAD. AS YOU CAN SEE. IS CLOSED. "What happened?" CAR CRASH. "Is everybody okay?" YES. "How do I get to Kingston?" FOLLOW EVERYBODY ELSE. "I don't know any other way to get to where I'm going today." WELL YOU'RE GONNA LEARN TODAY I GUESS. "Can you tell me how to get to –" NO! I'M DIRECTING TRAFFIC I CAN'T GIVE YOU DIRECTIONS RIGHT NOW GOOGLE IT MOVE ALONG YOU ARE HOLDING UP ABOUT EIGHTY CARS BEHIND YOU. Sometimes it is really hard to stay polite while directing traffic in the hot sun and people want to stop and ask stupid questions, you know?





Shoplifter at WalMart: The police are called and the suspect bolts out the store, with security in hot pursuit. The thief ran across the parking lot and went downhill through the bushes to the highway. Crossed 2 lanes, the median, 2 more lanes, and then jumped a fence into a residential neighborhood. By that time the two police officers on duty are pretty close; he can see it's not safe to continue through to the front yard so he jumped a side fence into another yard. And then another fence, into another side yard. Going up over the fences, he could see he had about another 20 more fences to go. He was pretty tired at that point, so he decided to give up. Myself and another officer tackled him before he could change his mind.





A guy called 911 to report his nice new giant SUV had been stolen again. Turns out the thief was his 12 year old son. Dad declined to press charges; he said he'd take care of it himself.

Homeless guy, downtown, Front Street. He's got the wild beard, dirty clothes, and likes to rant and rave about random things. He's got a fabulous brown hat that's got not much form or shape; it looks like just a classic hillbilly Appalachian mountain man hat that is just perfect for him. So I have to go talk to him again and tell him to stop yelling at the tourists. He explains that people keep wanting to pet his cat. (He does have a cat on a leash) "This cat is my wife! I don't want people to pet her! How would you like it if people wanted to pet YOUR wife all the time!" This topic of course raises many questions. I didn't ask any of them.





Me, at home. Very off duty. Out of uniform. Doorbell rings. (I hate that sound, BTW) I go answer the door, this better be goddamn good because I have a very clear, obnoxiously loud NO SOLICITORS EVEN IF GOD SENT YOU sticker on my front door and it's one of my neighbors who wants me to know that there were some girls, maybe 12 years old, playing out on the icy pond down the street. Because it was winter and the pond iced over. But not thick enough for kids to be playing on it, which is why there was a locked chain link fence surrounding it. Me, slightly horrified: "Are they out there right now?!?" Guy on my doorstep: "No, it was about a half hour ago." Me, more horrified: "Where are they now!?!" Him: "I dunno."





One of the new sheriff's deputies, a nice young man, introduced himself to me and shook my hand. "Hi Officer Hoke! You were my DARE Officer when I was in middle school!"







Homeless guy living out of his car got into an argument with another homeless guy living in another car. The aggressor decided to end the argument by pulling out a samurai sword and charge at his opponent with the sword raised over his head, the victim-to-be thought for sure he was going to get sliced open but a witness a hundred feet away yelled out the cops were being called. The swordsman abruptly stopped his attack and decided to flee the scene. In his haste, he left behind, uh, a letter from his probation officer. Which made solving and identifying the suspect pretty easy for me. A few hours later I came across the swordsman and took him into custody at gunpoint; ideally that would have a been a multiple-officer contact but I was solo at that time. Later, one of my coworkers said "Well, it's not really a samurai sword, it's a Katana." I looked at him. "Ohhh…WHATEVER!"

81 year old woman called 911 about once a week to report "they" were sneaking into her house and taking her linens and her food. I called her back every time and tried to convince her she was not right in the head. I was never successful. "Can they carry some kind of a gadget to make themselves disappear?" she asked me one time. Followed immediately by "I'm not crazy."





Lady calls 911. She had been in a minor traffic accident. Exchanged information with the other driver. His version of exchanging information was writing down his name and phone number on a scrap of paper and then leaving. It didn't occur to her to insist on looking at his, I dunno, maybe drivers license? Which was unfortunate because the name and number he scrawled down was completely fictitious. And she didn't bother to write down his license plate number either. Or take pictures of anything. Sigh..that was unfortunately not the first time I had seem that happen to somebody.





The time I was quietly joking with another officer about a drunk woman -uh...a former (and disgraced) alcoholic police officer who had been my sergeant even - who was completely passed out on her front porch in her bathrobe, headfirst down the steps. I thought she was dead, she looked so bad. But she was still breathing, so I called for an aid unit and while we were waiting the passed out drunk woman suddenly rose up, pointed her finger and yelled "I heard everything you two just said about me!" I got out my notepad and furiously scribbled "note to self....sometimes people who are passed out can hear what you say..!"







Senior citizen trailer park: sweet old grandma has called 911 again because her husband was well on his way to completely losing his mind. He's turned into quite the crochety old man and is delusional. I go into the house to try to talk to him while he's sitting in his easy chair. He pointed accusingly at his wife of 60+ years. "That whore there is sneaking out giving blowjobs to all the other men in this trailer park every day!" Poor grandma looked just mortified. I told her and her adult daughter that the first thing they should do was safeguard her bank accounts, before grandpa got any crazy ideas about spending it all. They wholeheartedly agreed that was some good advice. That call was kind of a hard one to deal with.

I was driving around on patrol and I spotted a fugitive riding some crappy bike down the road. My partner and I confirmed with dispatch that he had an active warrant for his arrest, so we scooped him up and booked him into the jail. He said his stupid bike would be fine where it was, leaned up against a light post a couple blocks away from the nearest building or anything. And that, folks, might explain why you see random things laying around unattended occasionally - because the owners were cuffed and stuffed by the police. Or hooked and booked, if you prefer.





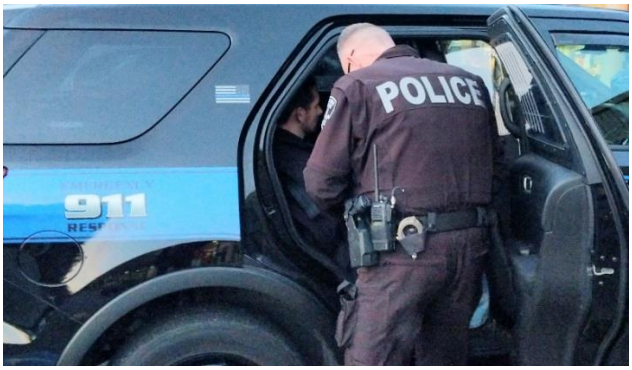
Karen called from Michigan. She was upset about her grandson in Poulsbo. "He's on heroin! And I know it's a problem all over this country!" Me: "Mmmmmhmmmm…" She continued: "I think he has gun now!" Me: "Okaaaay." Her: "He's been on heroin for years and it's getting worse! Me: "Mmmmmmhmmmmm…" Her: "Well isn't there anything you can do to save him?" Me: "I'm sorry, but if you're hoping we have some sort of super special program here we can put him in and rehabilitate him, uh, we don't." She then hung up on me. I guess she was hoping we had access to some kind of a super special no-cost rehab program that we would be able to convince him to go to. Voluntarily. We didn't.





Guy calls 911, quite upset. He has located his 14 year old runaway daughter at her loser boyfriend's house. We go out there and knock on the door. The boyfriend's dad – an even bigger loser – answers the door and confirms the girl is there in the basement. He sends her out to her dad. A couple minutes later boyfriend came out, completely baked on marijuana. Runaway's dad absolutely ripped into the boy verbally. It was fun to watch, the young man was trying sincerely to not fall down but was swaying so much back and forth that it almost happened. I could tell that even though he was higher than a kite, the dad's messages were getting through to him loud and clear.





Woman called 911 in a panic; she just discovered the man in her kitchen was not her husband, but a prowler! She had been upstairs with her baby and heard noises in the kitchen. Came downstairs to say hi to hubby and found burglar man instead. She screamed, and he ran back out the garage door. The woman and her husband (who had been out walking the dog) agreed that maybe it might not be the best idea to leave their garage door wide open anymore. This was in a densely packed neighborhood, in the middle of the day. It happens.






A woman came to the police department to complain about the financial manager for her neighborhood's homeowner's association. The woman was a couple years behind on her payments..$25 dollars a year, for two years... = $50 bucks. The HOA had sent her some letters asking for her to pay, and now the homeowner didn't like their tone or emails and wanted me to file the letters from the HOA lady in charge, you know, to add in to her personal file against her. I told the woman that we were not the West German police from the Cold War – we didn't keep files on citizens just because, and I wasn't going to accept any random letters to add to any files like that. I told her to go home and file them herself in her own file cabinet.





Guy in an excavator was widening out his dirt road, taking out some wild shrubs and trees. Tree hugging neighbor went apoplectic over the machinery destroying nature, and she threw herself in front of the excavator to stop it. Actually, she threw herself BEHIND the excavator. While it was moving. The police (that's me) had to explain to her why and how that was super stupid.






Two dudes in the Home Depot are casually shopping, sporting one AR-15 each strapped on their back. You know, as one does. The police are called for and I show up. I have to ask them if they're planning on a mass shooting or if they're just making a big stupid show of exercising their rights. Answer: just exercising their rights. Since it's totally legal, I can't make them take off their guns, even though a lot of other patrons were a little freaked out. Eventually the two walked out. Fortunately, as the years went on that became a rarer thing to have to deal with, as even the dumbest of the legal gun owners got the memo that doing so would be more likely to cause sheer panic amongst the citizenry instead of making them all feel safer.

Me, in a worn-down double-wide mobile home. The residents are filling out statement forms for an incident that they had witnessed. They were slow writers so I had to just stand there awkwardly for about 15 minutes, staring at their walls and décor, which could best be described as post-modern random American plastic kitsch. Absolutely none of it matched anything; there was no theme or commonality to any of it. I must have been gawking too much because I later was informed by my sergeant that they had complained to him about me staring at their walls too much. There are of course much worse things to get citizen complaints about; so I didn't mind that one at all.





Car crash on the highway; some idiot not paying attention ran into another car during rush hour traffic. Turned into a hit and run because the driver at fault did not want to stick around to be held any kind of accountable. Actually he fled on foot, leaving his broken car behind. His passenger also fled on foot. But not before trying to steal. The purse. From the woman they had just crashed into. HOW RUDE.







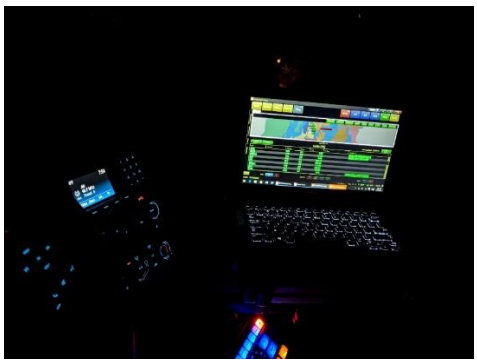
We get a report of a couple of domicile-challenged folks scuffling with each other in a public park. I arrive and see one of the offenders flee into the woods; he wants no part of me. He had warrants for his arrest and he's caught a short time later. His stupid girlfriend acts apologetic and sorry but I've heard her empty placations before and I'm tired of it, so I resort to coarse language to emphasize my points as I try to tell her how to live her life and behave in public. Another homeless dude nearby watching us chooses to get all offended by my language and he starts yelling at me that I'm bring unprofessional. Who yanked his chain? "Do you want me to turn my attention to you?" I asked. I note two other homeless dudes with him are very wisely choosing to stay silent and not give me any lip. So I don't care about them at all; they are literally not bothering me. But the guy who is calling me out and telling me how to act is bothering me considerably. I've had several encounters with him over the years and he's been quite unpleasant every time, and he had a reputation with all the other officers as being a difficult (and drug dealing) jerk. So a week later when we find him squatting in a basement of an abandoned house, it's a very simple matter to call the homeowner, let him know he's got folks living in his old run down beat to shit house and would he like them trespassed from there? Yes? Okay sir, we'll take care of it. Do I mind going out of my way a little bit to serve paperwork to the jerk in the basement, telling him he's not allowed there, and that if he stays or returns he'll be arrested? Nope, I don't mind at all. In fact, I felt pretty good about it. Now if he had just kept his mouth shut and minded his own business...we would have left him alone.

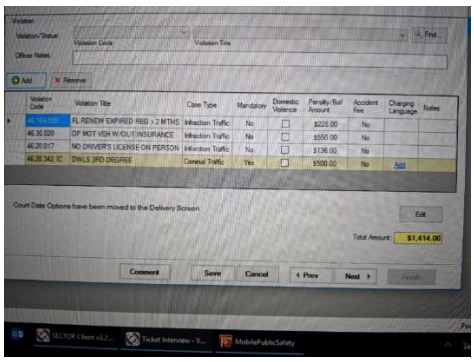












Traffic flagger called 911 to report a motorist got mad that she had stopped him in traffic for a road construction event. He didn't want to be delayed for even a minute so he very impatiently edged his car forward until he finally bumped into her. When she jumped back he swerved around her and took off. So yeah..that was a hit and run/vehicular assault. When I tracked him down and asked him what the hurry had been he announced "I WAS LATE FOR A GOLF TOURNAMENT!"





Car crash scene: a fast old muscle car had smashed into the side of a station wagon, at pretty high speed. Quite memorable because the oil pan on the muscle car had gotten knocked off and hot engine oil exploded outward in a fine spray; coating the side of the car that had been hit. The passenger's side window on the hit car had shattered on impact, and a split second later the oil hit, splattering the right side of the woman sitting in the passenger seat. She had little droplets of engine oil all on the right side of her head. How's that for unusual.







17 year old kid, repeat offender, rumored to have a stolen handgun in his bedroom. Mom lets me search. I found the gun under his dresser. The kid goes to jail. The incarceration penalty for possessing a gun? Guess how many months. Remember, it's a stolen gun, too. Now how many months? Oh the kid is also already on probation for multiple prior offenses. Now how many months would you guess? If you were to say "oh let's just lock him up for less than half a month" well then you would be correct.







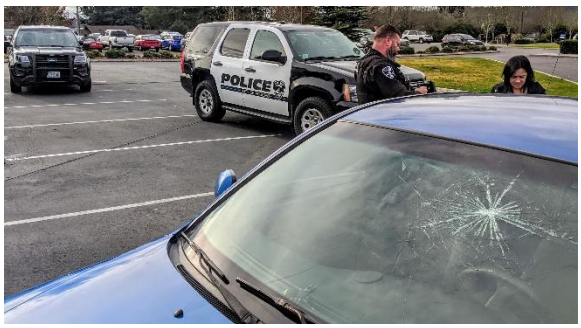
A developer paved a large new roadway that dead ended in a cul de sac; awaiting future commercial development. Perfect place for police motorcycle training. The department motor officer set up a bunch of traffic cones and spray painted their positions so future trainings could be held without setting up dozens of cones every time. One day when I was up there (not on a motorcycle) a citizen pointed to the spray painted marking, in even spacings and complex patterns. "You know what that all that is?" he said to me. He wasn't asking me, he was declaratively stating. "Those are battle formations for anarchists!" I looked closely at him to see if he was serous. He was. "Yup, this is where they practice their protests and lining up against the police!"







A woman got into an argument with her loser boyfriend. He managed to take both sets of her car keys when she wasn't looking, and then he walked away and disappeared. Which was a problem for her, since she lived about 2 hours away and was stranded in a parking lot. Myself and another officer used some tools to unlock her car so she could at least sit in it while she waited to see if boyfriend was going to come back. She mentioned to us that he had done time in prison. More than once. When I asked what his crimes were, she said she wasn't really sure. Also interesting, the huge smashed area on her windshield he had caused.







I knock on the house door and a young man about 13 years old answers. I presume he's Josh but he tells me he's Elizabeth, and I realize too late he's a she, not transgender, just very, very boyish looking. I apologize profusely and she turns away, telling me that it's a common thing with her. (Because honestly, she looked very much like a boy and not like a girl at all). Anyway, her dad comes to the door and I tell him that the juvenile detention center is done holding Elizabeth and Josh's other brother and dad needs to go pick him up. Dad refused. He said JV could just keep him there until he was 18.



5 am, 911 call: a teenager had just run away from home, on foot. I responded immediately and found the kid a couple blocks away. I took him back home. While I was asking the parents why the kid would run away at 5 am, the answer rings the doorbell: Two dudes from the Camp for Wayard Youths – I think from Montana – arrived to take the kid away for the start of his very long re-education. The kid was going to a boarding school for troubled teens. His escorts looked like they were from central casting; two tall huge guys with bulging biceps, very tight t-shirts, and dog tags. They were going to make sure their charge made it to the boarding school, which the parents were going to pay for out of pocket; literally tens of thousands of dollars. I was okay with all of it; the kid needed to be straightened out. Bye bye now!





I cannot count the number of times I've had to deal with folks who were freaking out upset over scratches on their cars. Tiny scratches, sometimes caused by known other people or cars or things, or caused by unknown things. One time a car crashed off a road and also took out an outside sandwich board advertising sign by a sidewalk. A small scratch about the size of a quarter on it caused the owner of the sign to freak out on me and demand insurance information from the driver at fault.





Some guy got in a car accident. Aid crew arrived, determined the guy had a head injury. He got his head bandaged and was being transported to the hospital for a medical evaluation. Halfway there he starts freaking out. The driver of the aid car has to stop since the guy is bouncing around so much and the crew is trying to restrain him. The patient manages to get a door open and he bailed out of the aid car on the side of the highway. He then ran across the highway, through the woods, into my jurisdiction. Broad daylight. I'm looking for him, and I find a helpful citizen who said "Yeah I saw that guy, he ran into the car rental place over there." So I go to the car rental business. The staff confirms they just rented him a car. I asked for his name and address, presuming that's where he's heading. "I'm sorry, officer," the manager said. "I can't give you that information." I explain the story, and the manager insists that it's policy not to share customer information. I explained again to the manager, speaking real slowly, that he just rented a car…to a guy with a head injury…and he was therefore not probably safe to drive…high risk to crash…give…me…name." Rental car manager had to call corporate across the country. About 30 minutes later, hands me a note with the man's name and number on it. "You don't have a copy of his drivers license?" I asked. "No, we don't record those," the manager replied. I eventually found the head injury guy at home; he had managed to make it home safely somehow. So. If you ever want to rent a car and you want to go with a company that really, really values your privacy, I can recommend: Enterprise.





Gas station attendant called 911 to report a customer had left a wallet behind. I show up and the ID is for an out-of-state resident. Actually from out of the country. The more I look in there, the more interesting it gets: the owner had an ID card and business cards that showed he was a private pilot for a charter jet company in the middle east. And not just any company; a very exclusive one that looked like, according to their website, most of their clients were Saudi Princes. The pilot's wallet also had a ton of paper money from a half dozen different Arabian countries. Between his wallet and the website, I caught enough of a glimpse into this guy's life to make me quite envious. I eventually found him; he was visiting his mother in town and had forgot his wallet at the gas station; which I was able to return to him. I didn't get any, but I'll be he had a ton of interesting stories.







Man walked into the post office and told the clerk behind the counter that somebody wearing a gas mask just dropped something into the mailbox out front. The clerk told the postmaster, who called the postal inspectors office over in Seattle. They decided that the post office should close, evacuate, and not let anybody near the big blue metal mailbox drop box out front. The bomb squad is called to respond and go into the drop box. They find only letters; no Taliban bio weapons or anything. Turns out the deposit had been made by one of the local residents- a woman who is overly sensitive to odors and fragrances. So sensitive, she wears a double cartridge respirator on the front of her face out in public. So....not really a gas mask..there IS a difference...



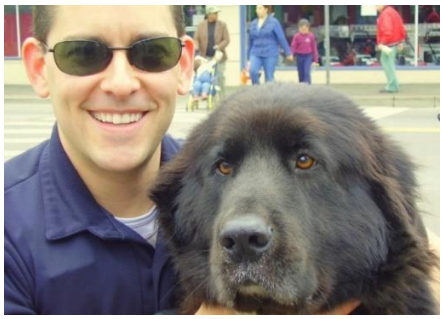


A new resident complains about speeders on the very long straight stretch of road in the woods near his house. My sympathy meter doesn't move much for him; I know my local history and I'm well aware that the road there has been used a drag strip by local kids going back to the 1940's. Like, literally for the past three generations. Not much I can do about that, sir.





Crazy women is in our police department lobby. I go talk to her. Among her chief complaints: one of her neighbors has been sneaking over to her house in the middle of the night and putting house jacks under her house to raise the whole thing up. Which is a pretty neat trick considering she has a basement with a solid concrete floor. Also he was shining big huge outdoor stadium lights on poles toward her property at night. Sometimes people are shit house rat crazy, and sometimes they are batshit crazy. She was batshit cray cray.





Old guy died in his living room, surrounded by his cartons of cigarettes. He was a retired engineer from Boeing. Had an impressive workshop with metal working machines; drills and lathes and saws, but no creations of his were on display, sadly. When he died, he fell forward off his couch and knocked over his portable heat dish heater unit, which when knocked over went into safety mode and turned off the heat. But it also turned on the warning buzzer. That old guy died with that heater sideways about a foot from his head, blaring its buzzer right into his ear. A neighbor found him a day later. I called for the coroner, who showed up and we spent a while digging through the old guys' papers to find some next-of-kin contact information. Before we found that, I came across a bank statement showing the guy had about a quarter million dollars in his checking account. Which was odd, since he was living in a very run down cabin that had some pretty major holes in the walls. The coroner was not fazed at all; he's seen a lot of dead folks with money saved away. He told me about one recent case where he had advised the next of kin to look through everything carefully before getting rid of it. He got a call back from the adult son who reported "I am so glad you told me to look! My old man had twenty and hundred dollar bills stashed in almost all of his books all throughout his house!"






This one happened in the old police department building; the one that had been an old doctor's office before we moved in. One of the exam rooms had been fortified into a holding cell for temporary prisoner custody, with 1" plywood sheets nailed onto the walls in a solid layer, and the door was replaced with a solid wood door that had a small square in the middle with steel bars. One day I had a teenager in there for something criminal, I can't remember what. I was across the hall typing my report. "Hey Officer Hoke!" the kid yells through the window. "What would you say if I told you that I could escape from here in less than 30 seconds?!?" I turned around in my chair and looked at him. "Well I'd say that I'd catch you and throw you back in there." I could see the kid grinning through the steel bars. "Okay, check this out," and he then produced through the steel bars one of the door's brass hinge pins. I stare in disbelief and then tell him he'd better put that back. I then go into the holding cell to examine the hinge pins and sonofabitch, the two hinges for the door are ON THE INSIDE of the holding cell. Where the kid was easily able to pull out one of the hinge pins. With both out, it would have been a very simple matter to pop the door hinges apart and take the door completely off. Fortunately it was a kid who figured that out and not the crazed murderer (with blood still on his clothes) we put in there a few years later. Needless to say, we had those door hinge pins welded onto the hinges the next day.






Traffic stop: three guys in a car, two were not wearing seat belts. One of the unrestrained passengers told me “Oh I was wearing my seatbelt, I just took it off.” Me, knowing That Was a Lie, replied “Well can you put it back on right now please?” Me, watching with great amusement as he struggled for a very long time to find it, get it out from underneath him, and then try to get it on with a hilarious amount of great difficulty. “Wow,” I finally told him. “It looks to me like this is the first time you’ve ever met that seatbelt, sir.”





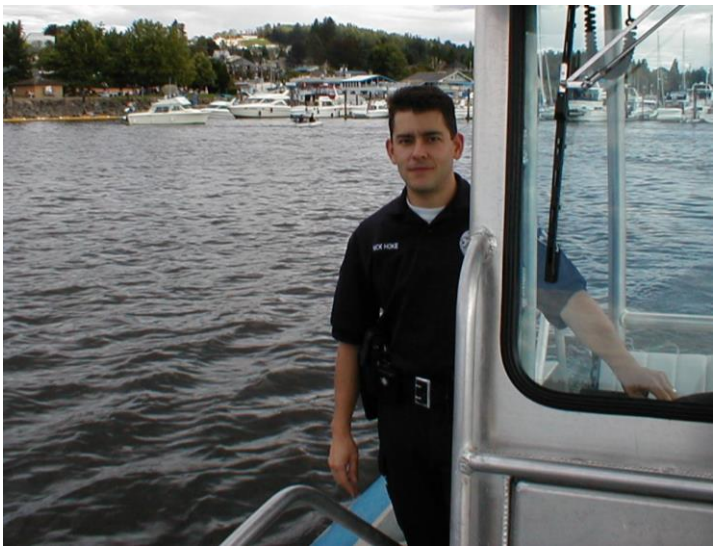
I once saw the aftermath of a trailer tire that had spun off the trailer and careened from the highway into a parking lot at full speed, hitting a couple parked cars. Mass + Momentum = Destruction.





Ditzy female deputy, off duty, speeding in her personally owned vehicle badly enough that somebody called 911 and reported her. When my dispatcher read her plate out over the air and added her name, her husband – who was my deputy police chief at that time – quickly told me that he’d take care of that call. Kind of funny because that was like the 2nd or 3rd time it had happened.





Old dead man, dead in his recliner. Local resident, very Norwegian-sounding first and last name of Ole Gunderson. Just about the best way to die, really – in one's easy chair, with no apparent signs of distress. The funeral home guys show up to remove the body. First order of business, remove the wedding ring from the finger, which is quite stiff with rigor. Funeral home professional dead-guy handler guy- himself in his 70's- efficiently grabs the hand, stretches the fingers out with much cracking, and got the ring off. I don't know what was worse - that the fingers needed to be cracked to straighten out or that the funeral home cadaver-remover-guy used just his bare hands.





It was a cold, wet September Sunday. The homeless young man outside the church was answering the paramedic's questions with a satisfactory degree of accuracy: "What is your name? Do you know where you are right now? What is the date today? Who is the President? How many quarters in a dollar?" But it had been his opening statement to us that led to the questioning: "I killed Satan." He also made some incoherent statements about LSD, so I determined his condition was probably a combination of mental illness and drugs. He willingly went with the aid crew to the hospital for a mental evaluation at the hospital.





Below: 1991. Don't look for me in this picture here, this was just two years before I was hired. As you can very clearly see, back in those days, mustaches were still very much a thing.



I've dealt with more than a few mentally disturbed folks who for whatever various reasons got fixated on a neighbor, and not in a good way. More than once I've had to knock on some poor guys' door and explain how the lady across the street, or next door, or that guy down in the hall in the other apartment, is absolutely convinced that you, sir, are bombarding them with sonic death rays, and they do not appreciate your planted listening devices, and could you please stop unplugging their refrigerator twice a day. And every single time the poor person said something like "I don't even know that woman, I just looked at her one time a couple months ago and she was being super weird, so yeah maybe I looked at her funny?" And I'd have to tell them "Well apparently that's all it took for her brain, at that time and place, to decide that you are her greatest enemy now and you are engaging in paranormal psychological warfare against her, as a contracted foreign government secret agent."





I had a crack whore handcuffed and in custody in the backseat of my patrol car; she normally lived in the jail but occasionally they let her out. She's got a bloody hand and she's making a biologically hazardous mess back there. An aid crew arrived to wrap up her hand. A citizen approached me then. "Um, officer? I just wanted you to know that right before you started to talking to that woman, she offered me a blow job to drive her to Silverdale." (Ten minutes away.)



I pulled over a woman for holding her cell phone up to her face while talking into it, while driving. She was the manager at the local McDonald's. She explained "I dropped my phone in the clarified butter and now the speaker doesn't work very well."

Family of 4 bought a nice big brand new motorhome. They load it up and off they go on a nice Memorial Day weekend vacation adventure. They get about 3 miles down the road and some dude, parked on the shoulder of the highway, jumps out of his Mitsubishi 3000GT to put himself directly in their path. The driver of the motorhome had no time to react and he smashed right into the suicidal guy. The motorhome skids to a stop and of course the suicidal guy is a dead bloody mess back there in the highway. I get called and arrive within about a minute. A nurse driving by threw a blanket over the dead mess, and I have to deal with the family in the motorhome who are all in complete shock and traumatized for life. What really sticks with me is checking out the dude's car; the door was still wide open, the engine was running, and the door dinger was still dinging. Also one of his shoes was out in the road. It had blood splattered all over it. I stared at it for a long time, marveling that so much blood could get on a shoe that was knocked off a foot like that. Turns out the blood was not his; it belonged to his girlfriend whom he had just murdered in Bremerton. Not 20 minutes after the homicide he decided to add a suicide to his resume. But in the worst possible way imaginable; by using somebody else's motorhome. Not cool, man.





A nearby police agency called us to see if a misdemeanor warrant we had on a subject was still valid; they had the guy in custody and needed the warrant confirmed. I looked in our records and found the warrant; it was a failure to appear in court for some kind of a criminal charge. The expiration date on the warrant stated it would be valid and in effect for until the year 2049 – 30 years (!) from the date of issuance. I guess the judge had got pretty mad that the guy didn't show up for his court hearing.





Local village idiot got run over in the roadway. He had a tendency to spaz out, sometimes on sidewalks, sometimes in roads. One day he flopped down in the lane of travel and a lady ran him over. He didn't die right away though; it took a day. One of the fire department guys tried to console the driver by telling her that the guy was well known to flop down in the roads; it was totally not her fault in any way. "So wait a minute!" she cried "You KNEW he did that?!

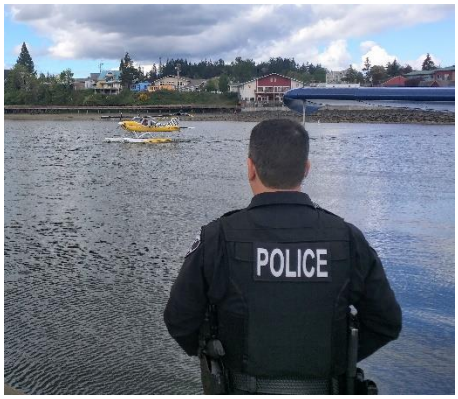






Another hoarder: but this one is Expert Level, on a couple acres. This guy had run out of room in his house so he had taken to stacking and stockpiling things along trails in the woods surrounding his house. It was actually kind of organized; there was a lawn mower and riding tractor section (with about 30 or 40 different old rusty models), a BBQ grill section (old gas and briquet models), an acre or so for cars, boats, motorhomes and motorcycles, a bicycle section (about 60 bikes, all junked) there was a section for scraps of wires, another section for pipes. Just about everything was on pallets, and pallets were stacked up everywhere. Truly epic. The best part was the boat in the tree: a 12 foot fiberglass rowboat, about 20 fight high up in a maple tree. Like a tree house, you know, as one does.



You know what a rumble strip is, right? Those grooves cut into the shoulder of roads? Fun fact: when it rains, those things fill up with water. And then if it freezes during the night, they become ice cube trays. So. If you're on patrol and respond to a car crash on the highway, and when you get there you jump out of your giant patrol vehicle which is a Ford Expedition, you'd be well advised to NOT land directly onto those ice cube trays. They are slippery as hell and you'll wind up on your ass.





T

Female teenager chronic runaway/juvenile delinquent is in the back of my patrol car again, and I'm taking her to the JV detention center again, because she can't go more than about 3 weeks between probation violations. I realize this is the 6th time I've arrested her, and like the 5 times before, I was not able to contact her absent parents. What does that say when an officer arrests your kid 6 times and you've never talked to him, even once?

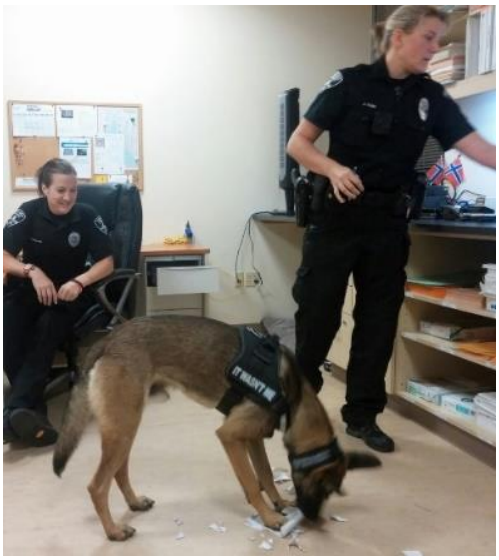




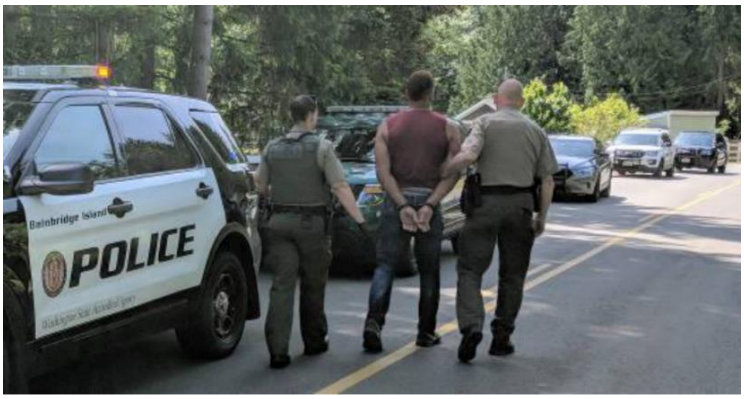

Our newest municipal court public defender shows up for court, to represent the great unwashed masses of accused alleged criminals. Nice young man, personable, and his name is Justus, even. I don't hold it against him that he defends criminals; he's an important part of the criminal justice system. Although every opportunity I get when I see him, I tell him that all of his clients are guilty. When we got introduced his face lit up and he said that he remembered me from back when he was in elementary school…I had been his DARE Officer when he was in the 5th grade.





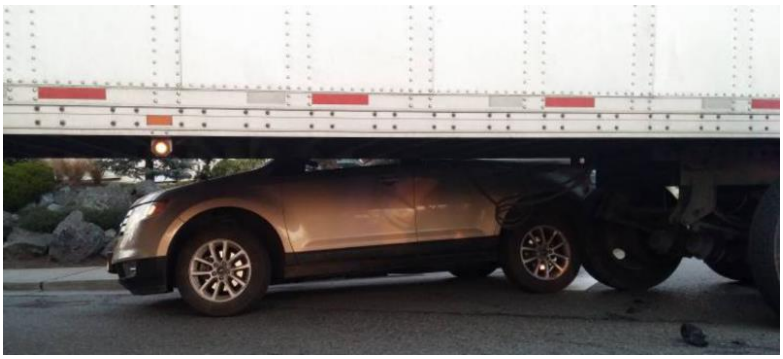


The man upset that a sawed-off tree branch was on the sidewalk in front of his house. It was from his tree, but it had been hanging over his fence onto the neighbor's property so he understood the neighbor had the right to cut it. But he didn't want the branch back in front of his house. He wanted me to yell at the neighbor to move the branch. Those two idiots had been going back and forth for years over stupid things like that and I was sick and tired of it. I didn't want to talk to the other neighbor so my solution was to remove the offending branch myself by dragging it down the street about a block and then I threw it into the woods. The complainant was then very upset with me for not yelling at his neighbor. I pointed out to him that I had just solved his problem. He was of course thwarted and now even more pissed. I sweetly told him that if it ever happened again then he could just call me again and I'd solve it again for him. Guess who never called again after that?!?





The guy I took into custody and booked into the jail. Something was not quite right about him so I made the run to the jail in a record short time, doing literally 90 mph on the highway. At intake he decided he wanted to fight the corrections officers. They had to pig pile him and toss him into a rubber room. The sergeant who came out last made a face and told me "He just shit his pants..!" Yep, I was really glad I had been driving fast to minimize the time he had been in my patrol car.





The one about the local catholic priest who performed an impromptu and unwanted exorcism on an office secretary/church staff member. It upset her greatly..but I didn't see what the fuss was about..why complain about a priest trying to rid you of demons? The really memorable part for me though was that the priest then lied to my face and denied it all.







There was a guy who lived in town, bought an $85,000 dollar Mercedes Benz convertible. This was a long time ago; back when the yearly registration stickers for the license plates cost a good percentage of the car's value; in his case, several hundred dollars. So he never bought the annual stickers. His work around was to buy a trip permit for a few bucks; good for three days. He could buy three trip permits a year, which he did. So when the summer weather was nice and the top was down on his car, he could drive it for a total of 9 days. We made darn sure he did not try to push it to ten.







Car crash scene; police and fire units arrive and the fire department's new lieutenant, transferred from some other department, arrived and started throwing his weight around, which in that case looked like him telling me where to repark my patrol car. I just stared at him blankly, because I had never before experienced a fire department Lt. telling me how to do my job. (Also..never experienced after, either.) Did I move my car? No, no I did not. Because 1) I don't take orders from fire department personnel and 2) My patrol car was actually perfectly fine where it was. Because I know how to do my job. Hey guess who got fired from the fire department a couple years later for being Too Difficult to Work With?





Somebody called 911 to report a swarm of bees. I responded to the scene and yep, found an impressive cloud mass of buzzing swirling bees in a parking lot. I called a beekeeper and he showed up to professionally mitigate the situation. To my alarm and amazement, he walked right up the large growing clump of bees on a bush. "They won't sting when they're in this state," he explained. "A new queen has left the hive, took some worker bees with her, and they're starting off on a new place to live." He reached into the giant mass of bees on the bush – the clump was about the size of two basketballs in mass. He casually started parting the bees with his bare hands, digging around. He wasn't getting stung at all so I edged in for a closer look. "Look, here's the new queen," he said, pulling out (with his bare hands) one bee that was bigger than the others. He placed her in a box and as we watched, all the other bees started to move over to her. Eventually when he had most of them, he sealed them up and took them away to start a new life in one of his bee houses. I wondered how many people tried his technique with worse results. 'Hey everybody watch this, they ain't gunna sting me, I learnt this from a professional once!" And then at the autopsy the medical examiner is all like "Poor bastard, didn't know those were African Killer Bees ..."

Autistic kid ran away from home and his mother freaked out, thinking he was suicidal. He hadn't gone far though; he actually was just hiding in the tv cabinet. That was not the first time I had responded to a missing kid who was in fact just hiding in the house somewhere.



The scene is the Port of Poulsbo boater's laundry room: A woman is freaking the fuck out because some guy took her laundry out of the dryer after it was dry, so he could use it for his wet clothes. When she found out, there was a confrontation and a slight scuffle, which we eventually worked out without criminal charges because both of them were being stupid in the moment. Of note in this story; she was white, he wasn't. Right after I go there the man pulled me aside and produced, of all things, a race card: "You know why she did that officer? She's trying to exert her white privilege over me!"





The millennial loser who still lived at home with no job. "What grade did you drop out of school?" I asked him. "Uh..8th grade." "What have you been doing then for the past seven years?" I asked. His reply: "Uh,...nothing." Not entirely a true statement: he had managed to successfully drain his parent's bank account over the course of a few years to fuel his heroin addiction. When dad finally looked at the bank account, close to $50,000 dollars were long gone. Mom had a clue, though, but didn't want to deal with any of it while it was happening.



The crazy man who alarmed his neighbors by taking all of his expensive electronics out into his driveway and smashing them all to pieces with a sledgehammer. (not illegal) The next day, a big yard sale where everything else –including the full set of his golf clubs – was all free. (also not illegal) Yep, he was quite mentally ill. (also..not illegal)

An angry old man in a very densely packed suburban neighborhood was upset about kids riding their bicycles in the middle of the street. Angry enough to call 911 and complain. I pointed out to him that there were 184 houses in the development, and if he really had a problem with kids on bicycles, then he had definitely picked the wrong neighborhood to move into.






Me, in a living room talking to a kid and his dad about the kid's seatbelt survival story. The kid – 18 years old - had somehow major miraculously survived a crash in which he got in his dad's Mitsubishi Montero and gunned it over a cliff. He sailed down onto the beach below, smashing hood first into the sand at a vertical angle, and then smashing onto the roof. The vehicle was completely, totally smashed. The drop from the road to the beach was around 40 feet. How the kid lived with only a few visible marks was amazing. The other amazing thing was that had actually been a suicide attempt. So the kid learned that if you want to kill yourself by driving off a cliff, you should, uh, not wear a seat belt.



Old guy, upset enough to call 911. I go to his house and he's telling me all about how "they" are sneaking into his house and stealing his food and towels. He doesn't know who "they" are and concedes it could be a singular "he" instead, at my suggestion for clarification. "He" (or "they") were of course figments of his imagination, which is a nice way to say he was paranoid and delusional. I spent some time with him, trying to talk some sense into him. (No success. My conversion rate is still zero. It is SO on my bucket list to someday convince some crazy person that their reality is skewed. In my dreams I have a breakthrough, the crazy person sees the light, and gets treatment. But no, every crazy person I ever met like that was also totally sure that they were most definitely not crazy. SAD!) Anyway, this poor old guy kept getting his door locks changed to keep "them" out. I don't know what was worse; that he couldn't replace the door locks himself, or that the locksmith charged him $140 bucks each time he got called out there. And in the previous six months, the locksmith had been out there several times.





Family went on vacation, came home and found the house trashed by a burglar. Turned out it was actually a teen party gone sideways. The high school kid who lived there knew exactly what had happened and totally lied to my face; when I discovered the truth I wanted him prosecuted for making false statements and making me waste a lot of my time investigating a burglary that wasn't, but the JV division prosecutor declined to file charges.

Bank robber burst into a bank, brandished a gun, and jumped the counter to confront the poor bank tellers. They were so freaked out afterward that they could not say if the robber was black or white. Turned out to be a white kid, 17 years old, who had such a fixation on Tupac Shakur that he jerry curled his hair and adopted a gangsta style of speaking, especially predominate when robbing banks. Note to bank robbers: don't spend a few minutes hanging outside the bank, dropping your used cigarette butts onto the ground where the police detectives will absolutely find and collect them and have them tested for DNA. Also the police chief was a little chagrined about that particular robbery because the bank was directly across from the City Hall, and he had been in there at that time having a meeting with the mayor while the bank got robbed across the street.





Responded to a tree-cutting complaint. The usual kind; somebody's scenic view was being blocked so they removed the offending trees, which may or not usually be on somebody else's property. When I knocked on the suspect's door, it was opened by somebody I recognized: my old high school English teacher.





A sailor called 911 from his house to report his all terrain off road quad runner thing had been stolen from his yard. I arrived and saw the scene: the suspect(s) had tried to steal it while it was on a small trailer. The suspect(s) put a trailer hitch on their truck, backed up to the trailer, connected it, and took off. But forgot to, uh, bolt in the trailer hitch receiver to their truck. So on their way out the driveway, the hitch fell out of the back of the receiver and the trailer and quad stayed behind while the truck continued. The suspect(s) came back though, and were able to lift the quad off the trailer and get it into the back of the getaway truck. They then got away with it, but left a mess behind.





Traffic stop: I've got a violator pulled over behind a gas station and I'm writing a ticket, doing my job, when the manager of the gas station came outside, walked up to my car, and pointed out to me that there was a metal sign posted on the back of the building that clearly stated it was a no parking zone there and that I should move.






The guy who secretly built a really long fence in his yard behind a screen of trees. Fence was about 16 feet high, using solid plywood panels. Even painted the whole thing black to avoid detection from the code enforcement officer. You know why a fence like that won't meet code? Cause in a good windstorm, it is going to fail. Spectacularly. Which it did.






Fire department responds to the trailer park for a front porch on fire. While they are putting out the fire, the home owner is standing next to me shaking his head. "Jeez..I don't know how that happened," he shrugged, taking one last drag on his cigarette and then flicked it – STILL BURNING - into the nearby dry bushes.





The woman with the heroin addiction who stole ten large bags of frozen shrimp from a grocery store to resell to a local Chinese restaurant. "I have an addiction!" she cried to the undercover loss prevention officer who caught her. "You're addicted to shrimp!?!?" he replied, sincerely confused, which amused me terrifically.





We had caught a criminal who had stolen a gun and had tossed it into a field somewhere near the schools. He had invoked his right to remain silent so he couldn't be questioned. However, since he had left a gun somewhere out in the open, where in theory a kid could stumble across it, we were legally allowed to question and harangue him about the where the gun was. Eventually he relented and showed us where he had thrown the gun, and we were able to safely recover it before anybody else did.





Woman calls 911 because her seriously overweight dog has gone down in a park and she can't get him back up on his feet. I arrive and meet Spud the Rottweiler, who weighed in at over 180 pounds. Probably because he ate nothing by french fries and tater tots. The only way to move that dog was to have the fire department show up with a special people-mover tarp thing, which is reinforced with enough straps to move an immobile human at several hundred pounds over normal. We picked up Spud, rolled him into her car, and sent her off to the vet so Spud could go to the rainbow bridge.





60-something year old woman died in her house. She had been suffering from cancer and chemo treatments and it was the taco salad that her husband had just brought home that did her in; a couple bites into it and she suddenly dropped dead in the living room. Husband and sister are in the living room consoling each other, crying, and I'm in the kitchen with the paramedics, wondering from where exactly the taco salad bowl had come from, so I know which one to never buy for me or my wife.



One thing I've learned in police work (well…I've learned a few things..) is that when you find a fire hydrant broken off and destroyed, or a lamp post crashed down, the suspect vehicle will usually be just a block or two away with extensive and disabling front-end damage. Sometimes on fire, too.









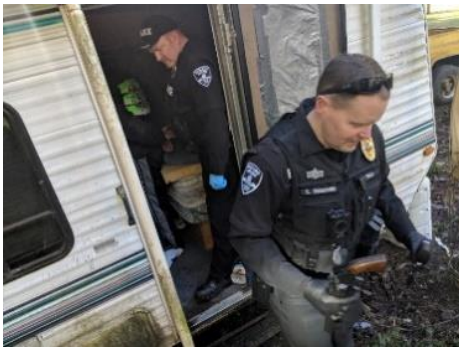

An upset woman called 911 to report a problem. I called her back. She said she had some shoes dropped off for repair at the cobbler shop and every time she went back there to pick them up, the cobbler shop was closed. And so now she was calling the police for help. (yes, she was a Bainbridge Island resident) Lucky for her, I was in a good mood that day. "Ma'am, I'm about a block away from there, I'll go see if he's open." I went to the small cobbler shop, and saw it was open for business. I went in and got the attention of the cobbler guy in there. "Hey you got an upset customer on the phone," and I handed my phone to him, which surprised him of course. He listened to the woman complain, and then he told her that he was sorry that he had to keep leaving his shop, because he was having medical issues. He made arrangements for her to come pick up her shoes. And I got my phone back. This would be a good example of small-town community policing, yeah?





A citizen came to the police department front counter and reported to me that he had gone to a local massage parlor and was offered a happy ending with his massage, which he declined. I started a police report, the detectives took over, and it concluded with a big multi-agency sting operation at the massage parlor, with some of the Asian women there getting arrested and charged with prostitution.



The one about the grown adult man who had gotten into the habit of huffing the difluoroethane from cans of compressed air, you know, as one does to escape reality. Parked his parent's car in a public parking lot, inhaled the contents of a can, melted his brain into goo a little bit more, than tried to drive. Immediately crashed into not one, not two, but three parked cars in less than 200 feet and 10 seconds. Then he fled the scene, somehow his car was still able to drive, but leaving behind a fabulous trail of fresh wreckage. I followed the trail of leaking fluids directly into his garage; caught him before he could get out of his car and run into his parent's house. Literally pulled him out of the car that was still smoking and dropping parts in the garage. Parents were appropriately horrified at the scene. They mentioned something about how this was not the first time he had crashed one of their cars. I booked the guy into jail. He bailed out and was free again in society before I was even halfway done with my investigation and report. Sometimes police work has a lot of unsatisfactory days.

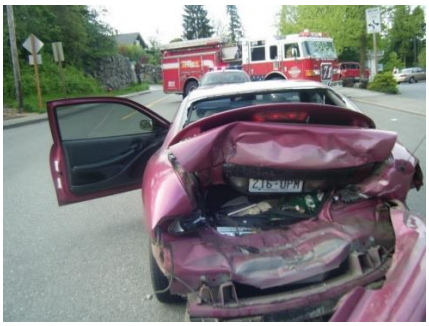




DEA agents called our office one day, said they were going to do a big drug bust in our town and if we could help, that would be great. A marijuana smuggler had crossed the border from Canada with some good BC Bud and was going to pass it off to another smuggler in one of our parking lots, in about, oh, 3 hours from now. So we got ready and we all caught the two smugglers. Too bad for them they tried to do the transaction in the parking lot of a Christian school – that absolutely counted against them as violating the "drug activity in a school zone" sentence enhancement, which adds several years to their federal incarceration. I remember the receiving smuggler's pickup truck had a slick-top tonneau cover that was sealed shut; to open it required placing a special magnet at an exact spot near the back tail light to activate the motors that raised it up, to expose the two hockey bags stuffed full of marijuana. Have you ever seen a hockey bag? They are HUGE; designed to hold hockey sticks and all that giant padded clothing that hockey players wear. They are big enough to hold 150 pounds of dope, each. The DEA was happy to get 300 pounds of marijuana but what they really wanted was the cash at the end of the deal. The smugglers quickly rolled and agreed to cooperate, so the truck wound up getting flown on a cargo plane to Chicago, where it was reunited with the hockey bags, one of the smugglers, an undercover agent pretending to be the other smuggler, and a whole bunch of federal agents and city cops to see the deal through and seize the cash.







Traffic enforcement time: I pull over a car for some kind of moving violation. The driver pulled over off the road into a parking lot, routine thing, sometimes I did this 15 times a day all over town. As I was talking to the driver, the business owner came outside to talk to me. Walked right up to my car while I was writing a ticket. "Excuse me officer? Could you please turn off your flashing lights? It's not a good look for my business here." Her tone was not politely asking though, she was more like telling me to leave.

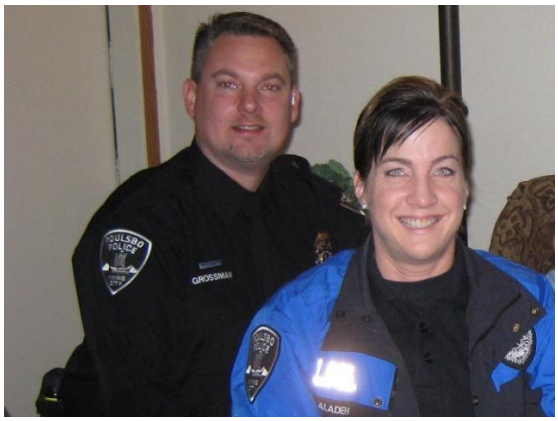




When Jeff Doran, the chief who hired me in 1993, retired, he got an easy part-time job at the clubhouse at the Wing Point Country Club on the Bainbridge Island's golf course. I remember one day several months later he stopped by the PPD to visit and he was wearing his golf club shirt and I couldn't help but immediately make a joke to him about his new job washing balls. In that he wasn't my boss anymore he was fair game to insult in a good natured way and he took it well.

Old man is in his car, waiting at a red light, on a slight grade. His car starts creeping backward. He doesn't notice because it's so slow. I notice, because he's right in front of me and getting closer to the front of my patrol car. He rolls back several feet so slowly that my concern level is about zero when his back bumper thumps into my front push bars, with just enough force to jolt the old man out of whatever la la land he was in. At the same moment he realized he had gone backwards he looks in his rear view mirror and sees he's literally run into the front of a police car. I was in a good mood that day and didn't even bother to pull him over after the light turned green; seeing his wide eyes in the center rearview mirror was enough for me.







The smoking hot young lady I pulled over who looked like a young Christina Applegate in her prime; when she went into the glovebox for her registration and insurance she did it by getting on her knees and leaning way over to the passenger side, in a very unlady-like manner. She had really tight jeans on. I don't know if she was young and innocent and naïve about her actions or if she was trying to distract and impress me but it was one my most memorable traffic stops ever just ever; if you had been there you'd agree.

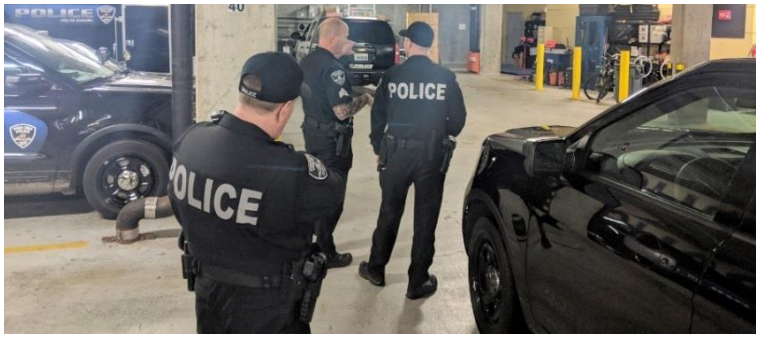






Christmas day: 6:30 am. I'm on duty. Some old man calls 911 again to complain again about his apartment neighbor again, making noise again. I call him. He wants to me to go to her apartment and tell her to be quiet. "She wakes me up at 1 am, she wakes me up at 3 am, and she wakes me up at 5 am every morning! This has been going on for 8 years now! This morning at 5 am I could hear her in the shower dropping her soap!"





A man is at the front counter of the police department. He had brought in his young son – the boy was only like 6 years old - to get counseled for shoplifting. In our holding cell. I somewhat reluctantly obliged. The man was actually, uh, a tribal police chief from a nearby Indian reservation police agency. I'm still not sure why he didn't do it himself. And if he thought I'd never mention this to anybody, he was wrong about that. Come on man, where is your pride?!?



27 year old suicidal guy, ate a bottle of prescription pills. Changed his mind, barfed them up. Told us that he was a little down because he had court date in a couple weeks and he knew he was going to get sentenced to five years' incarceration in prison.





Shoplifter ran out of the Walmart with loss prevention security officer in hot pursuit. I get called, arrive quickly, and see the guy running. I start driving in circles in the parking lot, lights on and siren blaring; people staring and running out of my way. Bad guy is dodging and weaving and he dives under a car and hides, I lose sight of him. Idiot security guard finds him and instead of quietly alerting me, he yelled and pointed at the bad guy, who then of course realized he needed to leave his spot so he got up and ran while I was in the other part of the parking lot. Bad guy sprinted out of the parking lot, made it into the woods, and totally got away. I had to point out to the security guard that the guy WOULD HAVE STAYED PUT under the car if the guard had played it cool and not drawn attention to him.

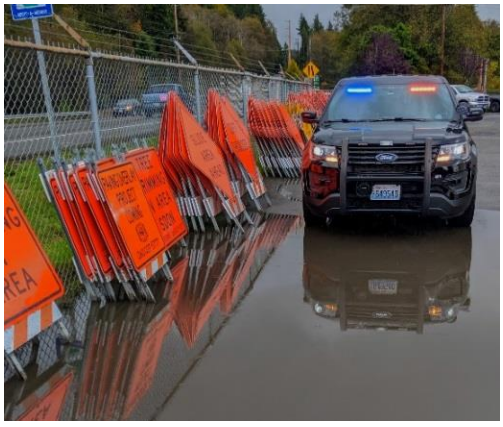






I got dispatched to a disabled blocking vehicle on the highway in the rain. I arrive on the scene. The driver, a young woman maybe 19 years old, explained she had run out of gas. I used the push bars on the front of my rig to push her car into a nearby parking lot. I could have been an officer AND a gentleman and then given her a ride to the nearest gas station (she even had an empty gas can with her) but as soon as she stupidly admitted this was the SECOND TIME she had run out of gas, I decided she needed to learn the hard way and so she could walk there and back. Yes, in the rain. Did I feel bad about that? Nope. Not even a tiny bit. Reminded me a bit of the time I got called to get into a locked car; the driver had locked his keys in there by accident. I always asked people "Has this happened before?" and sometimes they say something like "yeah, and the passenger side door lock is apparently easier to get than the drivers side," but in this one case, the guy admitted "Ah, this is like the 5th time I've locked my keys in my car."





Me, trying to calm down a woman having a severely bad reaction to her psychotropic medication, when she grabs my hands and presses to them to sides of her head. "Can you feel that in my brain?!?" She screamed at me. She then pressed my hands on her neck, yelling "Can you feel that?!?" I decided at that point to take my hands back to myself before things got even weirder.





The time I was training a reserve officer; he was casually driving me around one Saturday afternoon when I suddenly realized the car facing across an intersection from us was being driven by a high-profile most-wanted fugitive. I immediately directed the reserve officer to drive up to the suspect's car and block him in, since the bad guy had recently and successfully evaded the police several times already and the likelihood of a pursuit was about 100%. And since he was rumored to be packing a gun and had threatened to engage the police if contacted, I had to get the drop on him first, so to speak. Faster than it takes to read this, the reserve officer blocked him in and I jumped out of the passenger side of our patrol car, drew my pistol and pointed it at him from a very close distance. Mr. Fugitive Man wisely chose not get his own gun out but he still wanted to do the run-from-the-police-thing so he slammed his car into reverse, went backwards about 150 feet up the residential street, turned around, and then fled. He got away from us that day, but about 3 weeks later he had his last chase and a bunch of deputies finally caught him. This story is another good example of how being cop can look like calmly driving around, excitement level zero, to action and excitement LEVEL TEN within seconds and with absolutely no advanced warning.





Sheriff's deputy was in our office one night, it was actually like around 3 am. She had just run over a dog and had brought him to the 24 hour animal trauma clinic, but the dog died anyway. It was big old dumb and blind golden retriever that had wandered out into the road so it was not the deputy's fault. But the deputy had a busted swollen lip. She admitted that when she braked to try and avoid the dog, she ate her steering wheel hard, because, uh, she had not been wearing her seatbelt. I'll also add that this happened on a crazy curvy road with hills up in the north part of the county in the middle of nowhere. I will readily state that my respect for her absolutely plummeted when I heard she was driving around out there without her seat belt on in the middle of the night…that was just beyond stupid.







Me, working traffic. Parked by the side of the road in a parking lot, waiting for something interesting to come along. Aw crap here comes that crazy old man walking up to me. He's tall, got one eye staring off in a weird direction, got his scraggly hair in a pony tail, looks like Mic Fleetwood's crazy brother, if he were to have one. He approaches my car and starts his rant: "Don't donate organs to the hospital when you die! They will charge your survivors ten thousand dollars for each organ and they will get stuck with a giant bill for over One! Hundred! Thousand! Dollars! and the hospital will always take…" The third time he approached me instead of quietly listening I decided to talk over him and try to set him straight. Nope, didn't work. He had an Important Announcement and he kept forgetting he had already proselytized to me. So after that whenever I saw him out walking around and he looked like he wanted to walk up to my car, I'd drive off.





Police department interview room: Guy sitting across from us is trying to explain how he was showing pictures on the computer to his wife and one of them turned out to be a porn video that he immediately turned off but she was convinced it was a secret recording of her young daughter in the bathroom. He insisted it was not, but then couldn't prove it otherwise because oops darnit had had just accidently deleted the video. So mom freaked out, kicked out her husband, and called the police. Guy came in for an interview. He insisted to us it was just a porn video he had downloaded and it was not his stepdaughter at all. No way. The fact that he had 7 video cameras set up in the house "to keep an eye on his old aunt" did not ease our suspicions. The fact that he had "accidentally" deleted the video instead of showing his wife to prove it was not his stepdaughter also did not help his case at all. Immediately after that he quit his job and his wife divorced him.





Back in the old days when way more people smoked cigarettes, it was not uncommon for drivers to finish their smokes and toss them out the window. That was frowned upon. Illegal! Nothing made my blood boil more than that! When I caught jerks nonchalantly flicking or dropping half-smoked cigarette butts out their cars, I'd pull them over and the ass-chewing would commence. I'd give them a choice though when it came time for the punishment – instead of a very expensive ticket, I would consider the matter closed if they would go just back and kindly pick up their cigarette. With varying degrees of reluctance and griping, they'd all choose to retrieve their trash instead of getting a ticket. So I would gladly walk out into the road and hold up

traffic to make it safe for them while they hunted around in the middle of the road for their cigarette butt. I loved the fact that everybody watching could tell exactly what was going on. One time I did that to a lady who threw her cigarette out right in front of a busy car dealership. She was not exactly thrilled to be out in the roadway looking for her cigarette butt while a half dozen nearby cars salesmen were watching the spectacle, highly amused, while I made a big show of blocking traffic for her and keeping her safe. She was so pissed off about the public humiliation that she went to the police department to complain to the police chief. The chief asked her if she got a ticket? She said no. Chief told her that it sounded like a pretty good deal to him and she had no grounds to complain about anything.





I had a (much different) police chief later – his tenure was for five long years - who was unofficially diagnosed as a psychopath. He wasn't a complete monster, but he did have an apparent personality disorder of exhibiting "persistent antisocial behavior, impaired empathy and remorse, and bold, disinhibited, and egotistical traits." So…it didn't take long for all of the officers to hate him. It didn't help when at one point he decided all the patrol officers should each start doing Special Projects. We got to choose our Special Projects, at least. Minimum of one per month. Fulfilled with all kinds of supporting paperwork. The goal was for each officer to identify and problem in the city and fix it. Probably worked great in the Chief's previous large city in California, but when you make a dozen patrol officers in a small town do a dozen special projects a year, that total comes up to 144 per year. Special Projects were things like identifying junked cars parked at the ends of dead end roads Ok fine, we'll target those. There were maybe like seven. After those were quickly used up as special projects and removed, then we had to start targeting junked cars parked in front of people's houses, only because we were running out of ideas. I mean, 144 total projects in 12 months was pretty difficult, so after we did all the things we could think of like having public works clear those branches away from that speed limit sign on that one road, or do a traffic emphasis patrol in front of the elementary school, it became really hard to find things to fix. Basically he wanted us to clean up the town, but it was already pretty clean. Which meant our special project ideas started getting lamer and lamer. Eventually that whole idea went away. Then he decided to the divide the city into sectors, and assign officers to take special care of their sectors; get to know the apartment managers, the business owners, the dark alleys, etc. Again, a great idea in a bigger city but at only 3 square miles, our city was way too small to divide up, and all of the officers already knew everything about everybody anyway. Eventually that stupid plan also went away, thankfully. He was not a smart police chief.



Unfortunately, I've got a few more stories about the psychopathic police chief who had come from California. In case you're wondering what a frustrating police chief looks like, sometimes it looks like requiring each officer to submit a "Daily Activity Report" at the end of every shift. With points for arrests, or traffic stops, or tickets written. The problem was that the stats generated were stupid; because the very nature of police work makes quantifying productivity very difficult. If you want to rank officers by numbers made up, does a cop who writes 11 parking tickets (11 points) get more points for an officer who is on an stakeout for 7 hours and then catches a felony suspect (1 point) that everybody else has been trying to corner for months? Does an officer who spends 4 hours working traffic enforcement deserve more or less points than the officer who has to spend 4 hours typing up a DUI arrest report? Yeah, that whole thing was all about making up number and statistics; eventually he gave up on that whole idea too.

Another time – we found out about this years later – Chief Voldemort was coming back from a county chief's meeting. Our deputy chief was riding with him and got a royal ass chewing, because deputy chief had committed the venial sin of piping up during the meeting and saying something intelligent. As told by the deputy chief later, the A-Hole Chief suddenly turned on him in the car. With his face all red and mad, he pointed his finger at him and yelled "Don't you EVER upstage me like that again in a meeting with all the other police chiefs!"





A middle-aged upper-class woman with plenty of money to pay for things got caught stealing stuff from a grocery store. I got called to take a report, and after I finished my interview with her I asked her how she got to the store. She told me that she drove there. I asked where her car was. She told me and I went and found it in the parking lot…with lots of other stolen merchandise from other stores in there. I knew it was stolen because none of it was in shopping bags. Upon further questioning she admitted to me that that yep, she had been bored that day and had stolen from multiple stores. I felt rather pleased with myself for checking out her car and finding more incriminating evidence in there.





One day I'm out on patrol and I see a guy walking a dog along a sidewalk, but the dog is like 100 feet in front of the guy, and there is obviously no leash involved. I give a disapproving look. The guy explains "It's not my dog, it got loose from somewhere and I'm trying to catch it." Oh, okay, I thought. I'll help too. The guy gets close enough to the dog and then he suddenly barks out "SIT!" – the guy yelled that, not the dog – and the dog immediately sat down. The guy was then able to walk up to it and clip a leash onto it. I was stunned. "Oh snap that was cool as hell!" I thought. I realized that of all the stray dogs I had ever tried to catch, it had never once even occurred to me to see if any of them would respond to a voice command of "SIT!" So that's still on my bucket list; I really want to do this myself someday. Every dog I ever tried to catch usually just took the treats I threw them, ignored my sweet talk, and then ran away again.



The shirtless dude I stopped one night to tell him not to skateboard in the dark on a busy road. That was his thing...to ride his skateboard even in the dark. Fast forward a few years, one day I come in to work and I was told that dude had died during the night. I said "Oh was he riding his skateboard in the middle of the road in the dark?" Yup. The truck that hit him almost tore his head completely off; it was a pretty severe impact. Dude should have listened to me; he might still be alive today.





I pulled over a lot of people who weren't wearing their seatbelts because they had a pretty good reason, like a shingles outbreak, or a recent mastectomy, or a lung removal surgery. I'm an empathetic kind of guy so I always gave them a pass without asking for any more details. Usually they didn't pull up their shirt quickly – before I could stop them - to show me proof. Usually.





That chief also got mad when his #2 guy got his picture in the newspaper at some kind of community event. That was a huge no-no; as everybody knows only the Chief is worthy enough to represent the department in the local press.

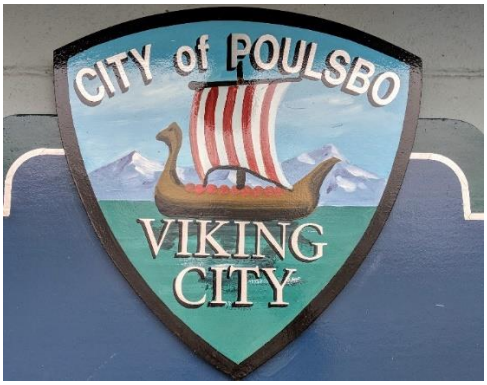




And I know it also really rankled him when I kept getting the annual community "Officer of the Year" award from the local newspaper. I got nice certificates from the paper, but never a word about it was mentioned from the Chief and of course the award certainly wasn't put on a wall in the office, because when the Police Chief's name is misspelled so badly that it looks like "Officer Nick Hoke" then no way of course will it be displayed or even a passing mention of it made in my annual evaluations.

The old guy who got mad at a neighbor who was complaining about tree cutting and trimming. The old guy growled at the younger man to get off his doorstop or he'd hit him. The younger man didn't move. The older man punched him in the nose, bloodying it. I got called. I took the older guy to jail. The case went to trial and the old puncher was actually acquitted; the jury thought the younger man should have left when warned to.







Old man living in an old house on the waterfront had lit a small burn pile on the back patio. Ok idea but terrible execution because he did it directly underneath the deck above his head. The flames got too high and hit the 2nd floor deck overhead, from there it went up an outside wall and quickly spread to the cedar shake roofing. I got there before the fire department, and convinced the old man to not go up on the roof himself with a garden hose. Fire department arrived, chain sawed some vent holes in the roof, charged up the fire hoses and blasted the roof and attic, and eventually put out the fire. Adult son shows up and confirms his father has dementia and is not the best decision maker in the family about making fires. The next day I wake up and realize just how badly my uniform had been infused with smoke; my whole house smelled smoke funky. Especially in the closet where I had, uh, regrettably hung my uniform up. Next to all the other clothes. Including, yes, my wife's clothes. This was the same day that I realized that day-old house smoke fire smell in clothes does not smell anything like campfires; it's much, much worse. After that time I learned that whenever I got anywhere near a house fire I should wash my uniform as soon as I got home.

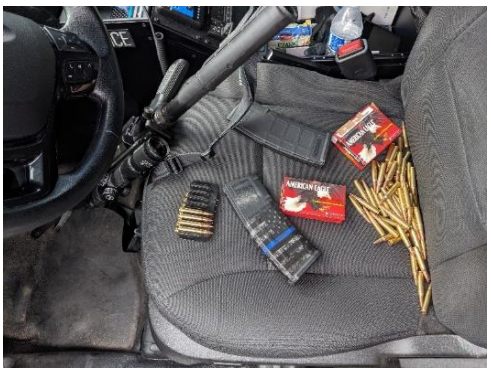




Me talking to a young woman, crying because her boyfriend broke up with her. (She was crying about it, not me.) She feared loneliness so much that she preferred a loser abusive boyfriend to nothing at all, but he was finally done with her so he had pulled her out of his car and dragged her up her driveway to her front door to ger her away from him. In a desperate attempt to keep him from leaving her she had grabbed his wallet and phone, to take hostage, I guess. "That was a stupid thing to do, huh?" she later asked me. Now, it's generally bad form to blame victims but sometimes the cleanest cuts are made with a sharp knife. "Yep," I replied. "That. Was. Really. Stupid."



The time I caught a little 7 year old punk kid with whiskey in a sippy cup, out on a sidewalk in public. My demands for answers resulted in him defiantly yelling at me: “I know my rights!” And yes that was not a typo, the kid actually was only 7.





The one where the mini mart store clerk told a customer his lottery ticket was not a winner, even though the ticket-reading machine was making jackpot sounds. Clerk then kept the ticket and pretended to throw it away. Customer demanded it back. Customer got it back and then took it to another store, where the clerk there yelled at him “Hey fella you can only cash in a winning ticket once, nice try!” So the customer called for the police. That’s me. We went back to the first store. Clerk denies everything. I look in the garbage behind the counter and I find a whole bunch of “not winning” tickets that had already been redeemed because, well yes, they were winners. I reported this to the state lottery commission, who didn’t care and had no interest in taking away the lottery machines from any outlets; they said it was a local police matter and it didn’t involve them. Not long after that, the state started installing scan-it-yourself lottery tickets readers so no more crooked clerks could take money from “non-winning” tickets.





6 am: still dark. Me, racing towards a crashed car scene just called in to 911. I have my emergency lights and siren on. Reports are that a car has sailed off the road and crashed onto the beach down below. Paramedics and EMT’s are a couple minutes behind me. I arrive. I stare down onto the beach. Tide is in. Yep there is a crashed car upside down on the beach, half underwater. Fortunately the three teen boys inside somehow managed to find a door that worked and they were able to force it open and crawl out into the water and swim out to safety past through the wreckage of the beach deck they destroyed on their way down. Good thing they made it out; otherwise it would have immediately defaulted to me to go in and pull them out somehow.







The time grandpa got in his adult son’s car and drove it for a while, but it was “handling like shit” so he brought it back, not realizing the parking brake had been on the whole time and the front-wheel drive car had pulled the locked back wheels so much they had worn down on the bottom to the wire bands. Which caused impressive grind marks on the roads all the way around the block, which had bewildered me significantly as I traced them back to the carport.

Another wounded deer, hit by a car, that I really didn't want to shoot. Another officer said he'd do it and I gladly said "Go right ahead sir!" but his bullet missed the brain stem by just a fraction of an inch and left the deer still alive and twitching more but now with one eyeball horrifically bulging out. "Well shit I could have done THAT myself!" I told him.





The small airplane pilot who crashed and flipped his small '39 Ercoupe airplane in the woods not anywhere near a landing strip. Engine had seized up midflight. After he regained consciousness and crawled out of the upside down wreckage, he called 911. Nobody had seen him quietly lose altitude and crash in the middle of nowhere; his call was the first notification we had. He wasn't really sure where he had crashed but his cell phone location showed up at 911 and after running through the woods for awhile I found him. An aid crew stabilized the pilot; he was bloodied and banged up but talking. Seemed relatively okay to me. Off to the hospital he went, where his injuries worsened into complications and infections and two weeks later he died.



I was at an FBI training once about how to interview suspects and get them to confess. One of the instructors – an active duty FBI agent – told the class a true first hand story about a rapist who was being questioned. There was not enough evidence to arrest him, and he wasn't admitting to anything even though the interviewers knew he was guilty. One of the interviewing agents decided to try and get the suspect to confess by suggesting that just like fingerprints, a "penis print" had been obtained from the victim's vagina and so the agents were going to apply for a search warrant to see the suspect's own unique penis print. That didn't scare the suspect enough to confess, so they let him go. The next time they talked to him he told them they would not be able to get a penis print from him because he had found some sandpaper, and clearly had enough motivation to, uh, make it impossible to get a penis print from him. Even though he wasn't guilty.











Big police drug raid at a house. I was on patrol in uniform, assigned to watch the front yard. The team in tactical uniforms and a battering ram bash in the front door and rush inside to catch the bad guys. They somehow missed a side stairwell and side door, and that's where one of the drug addicts inside woke up and staggered out into the sunlight. "That's really weird," I thought, seeing him stumble out toward me. "Usually they grab onto the guys in there and not send them out to me alone.." And then I realized that the team inside had missed him and he was a leaker, soon to be escapee. I figured I should do something about that. Now I knew the guy – besides heroin he also like doing high school girls, which I did not approve of since he was closer to 30 than 20. I looked around; no witnesses. I charged and tackled him onto the paved driveway hard enough to satisfy me. Cuffs went on and then the tac team came out and noticed I had their guy in custody. Dude went off to jail and then prison. He got out just a couple years later of course but I will always relish our private little moment together on the pavement.







The time a local resident - a old retired FBI agent – called the police department, asking if maybe we might have an extra handcuff key he could maybe perhaps borrow? Because reasons? I helped him out. My suggestion to everybody is that if you have handcuffs in your house, you should probably also have at least one or two handcuff keys.







Drunk angry idiot brandishes his new toy to a traffic flagger. It was a bb gun that looked like a super realistic for-reals revolver. Flagger thought it was a real gun. Of course the police did, too. When we called suspect/gunman out of his house to come talk to us he didn't take seriously our commands to keep his hands up and be compliant, he was joking around slapping his hands saying "let's do this" as he walked up to us a fast pace. Rather alarmed, the police response was to give him an abrupt pig pile police tackle. Ribs were broken. His. We didn't feel bad about it. In most other places and times, he would have just been shot for approaching us like that and stupidly ignoring our commands to stop. He was not really the brightest fella.





A new tattoo shop opened up in the downtown area. The owner of the corner walk-up coffee stand next to it gets upset over all the cigarette smoking going on now next to his coffee place. It comes to a head one day and the coffee shop guy loses his shit over all the cigarette smoke and he storms up to the city hall, police front counter, and demands action. I was on duty and in the office, so that made me Action Man that day. I walked down to the corner with the guy and try to talk to the tattoo shop owner. First I encounter one of the tattoo artists outside, smoking away. I point out that he about 12 feet away from the front door of the coffee shop, totally violating state law, and deserves a ticket but I'll let him go with just a warning since he appeared to be genuinely sorry and apologetic, now that the police are yelling at him in his face. Then I go find the owner of the tattoo parlor. I explain things to him. Like, the law. "Hey listen I can't control my customers or employees if they choose to smoke outside," he told me. I was not impressed and let him have it, and end with "..there will be no more warnings after this, from now on anybody caught smoking out here will get issued a ticket." Then I left. Figuring it would be a matter of when, not if the first ticket gets issued to a violator. Later that night, I was off duty and driving through town in my personal car. I look ever and see one of the tattoo artists – the same guy I had caught earlier in the day – smoking nonchalantly outside their door. "Did that guy forget what Officer Hoke told him earlier today?!?" I asked myself. "Or maybe he thinks Officer Hoke wasn't serious?!?" I drove by two more times, to make 100% sure it was a cigarette and not a vape. Yeah, I was sure. Next morning and on duty, I wrote out a ticket and tracked dude down at his apartment. When he answered my knock at the door I told him "Normally I'd say "good morning" but this is NOT a good morning for you, because you are being issued this civil infraction ticket for breaking the law again." I handed him his $205 dollar ticket and left. Hey. Guess what. Guess where I never, never saw anybody smoking again after that? Needless to say, the coffee shop owner was quite satisfied with my help.





The career criminal with an impressive rap sheet who tried to elude the police by starting a car chase; it ended in a crash. He was not injured though so he went to the jail instead of the hospital. But first he had to get processed for a DUI. It was a warm summer day, he was wearing shorts, allowing the whole world to see his giant tattoos on the front of his legs. On his right shin, in giant bold outlined letters: "FUCK" and on his left shin: "COPS." Of course I took a picture! Here it is!



Grocery store loss prevention undercover guy caught a shoplifter. Called for police. (That's me!) I show up. Shoplifter confesses, and when I asked what he does for a living, he said: "I'm the marketing director for a large corporation over in Seattle," which he shamefully names. "I, umm..steal things just for the thrill of it." I stare at him in silence. "I guess I need a new hobby," he continues. I just stare at him, letting him talk. He finishes with "..I feel like a dick." The store security guard said he called me because the guy has no wallet or ID. "It's in my car," the thief tells me. "Well then let's go get it." I said. "Uh, my girlfriend is in the car with her sister." Me: blank stare. Thief: "This is going to be so embarrassing.." Me: blank stare. The three of us then walk out to his car; I'm of course in full police uniform, and the security guy has his badge around his neck. Marketing director thief man is looking pretty ashamed as we approached his car with his girlfriend and her sister. "Well, you said you do this for the excitement, right?" I pointed out. "Bonus round!"





Court day. I'm standing outside the courtroom in the police lobby, wishing for outside air because as always, the great unwashed masses have arrived for their court appearances and most of them have worked themselves into a state of a stress that is an assault on the senses of smell: fear and desperation and anxiety...Actually maybe some of the folks in there had taken a shower at some point in the week, so they weren't ALL stinky. One guy remained back, sitting in the lobby. I asked him if he wanted to go into court and he declined, saying he was only there because his buddy had needed a ride to court. Then: "Hey Officer Hoke do you remember me?" I looked at him and said "Erm, nope?" He reminded me who he was: "You arrested me a couple years ago. Took me to jail. I wound up going to prison. Just got out two weeks ago." My immediate thought was "Well this certainly seems awkward now. Should be awkward for HIM, but I'm the one who feels weird about this right now..." The guy fortunately wasn't mad at me, looks like the prison system had at least got through to him that it was his own fault that he had become a criminal. Obviously, that was not the first time somebody had told me a story like that. It was just awkward every time though.





The autistic young man who moved into a vacant apartment; he didn't know he had to fill out an application form first and talk to the manager to get, you know, permission. He just saw the sign advertising a vacancy, found the door unlocked, and so he literally moved in furniture and a tv and everything and surprised the hell out of the manager. The kid's parents showed up and apologized profusely, and said they'd explain to their son that an "Apartment Available" sign was subject to terms and conditions.



Old guy came to the police department to report he was the victim of hate crime. His said that he was a retired veteran and somebody had vandalized his mailbox, so….hate crime. I had to explain it to him carefully that just because he hated the crime, it didn't actually make him a hate crime victim.







During one particularly busy 10 hour dayshift, I noted these following activities that I had responded to: A shoplifter at Walmart, a motor vehicle collision on the highway, an out of control autistic kid threatening suicide in his driveway, another shoplifter at another store, a boat trailer parking complaint in a neighborhood, a knucklehead reporting a suspicious gun sale, an identity theft case, another Walmart shoplifter, a patrol check for a suspicious thing, a mentally ill woman who came into the station to complain about crazy things, and finally another motor vehicle collision. And the other officer on duty handled his share of other calls, too. That was a busy day.





Two cars crashed into each; it was a serious crash. One of the drivers was a younger guy; he was okay but his car was destroyed. The other car had an elderly couple in it; I talked to both of them while they were still in their seats, waiting for the aid car. I then went over to talk to the younger guy who caused it. The aid crew showed up and talked to the old couple for a bit. A minute later I see them frantically doing CPR on the old lady; while they were talking to her she had a cardiac event…and she died.

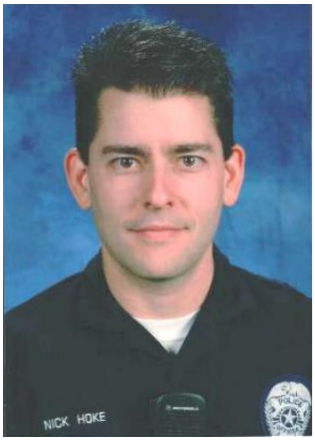




Apartment property manager was a little freaked out to discover a burglar had taken advantage of his open glass sliding door and walked right into his apartment during the night to steal some things. Either the burglar didn't notice or didn't care that the manager had been asleep on the couch just a few feet inside the door. The manager agreed with me that maybe keeping the door closed at night would be a prudent goal to work on.



An ex-con, freshly done with his 6 years in prison, moved into his sister's place with her fiance and her two daughters. After about a month it was not working out so she gave him the boot. A month later the ex-con came back and busted down a door to get in. Sister's fiance was having none of that and he successfully fought off the perp, who then fled. The neighbors called 911 to report the ruckus and I showed up. Sister was upset at her stupid brother for causing a scene. I asked why her brother had gone to prison. "To be honest, I don't really know," she told me. I refused that answer and kept pressing. "Well, I think it was some kind of conspiracy charge," she added. Like a determined dentist pulling stubborn teeth, I kept at it and she ended with "I really don't know, Officer. I think it had something to do with the cartels."





Guy reported a theft of $2,100 dollars. From his bedroom. During the night. Told me the suspect could not have been any of the other 7 guys living in the boarding house. Could have been one of the dozen or so other guys who had lived and moved out of there in the previous few years, though. I pointed out that maybe keeping his money in a small safe on his desk, clearly visible from the main living room might not have ben the wisest idea. And if you're going display a small safe on your desk..at least, I dunno, bolt it down?







Another story about the police chief we had for five years; the one all the cops hated. He was the kind of guy who would walk into a room, ask "How goes the battle?" in a friendly "hey how are all you guys doing?" way, but he didn't care about us in the slightest, as evidenced by the same result whenever anybody actually responded with something – he would leave the room while somebody was telling him about their day, or weekend, or what was going on. If he was really on top of his game he'd throw out a placating "good to hear" on his way out but it was clear he hadn't heard a word anybody said. Usually, he just said "how goes the battle" without even stopping as he walked by. It actually got to be kind of funny, really. If you need a visual on what a psychopathic police chief looks like, ours looked like John Schnatter, the founder of the Papa Murphy's pizza business.



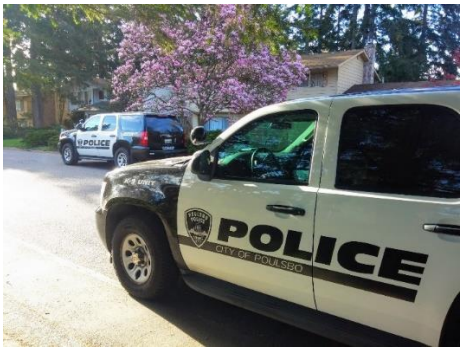


One last story about that insufferable chief of police: When his first deputy chief quit after a year or two because he couldn't stand him anymore, the replacement deputy chief also had a hard time with him. Best example is when the chief wound up berating the new female deputy chief for having the audacity to walk into a big chief's meeting with other police chiefs BEFORE him. I mean, she literally walked into the room before the chief. Which in his mind as a major breach of protocol, because as everybody knows the Chief is supposed to walk into the meeting room first, and then the deputy chief will come in after him. Otherwise the other chiefs might get confused about who is in charge, I guess? Yeah...that's the kind of terrible boss we had to deal with for 5 long years. Worst. Boss. Ever.






Woman was having a dispute with her ex husband over custody of the kids. She told me that she just KNEW! that he was using drugs and she wanted us to drug test him! Right now! Isn't that.. interesting. Are you confused right now, wondering why and how cops can drug test random people like that? Yeah, I was confused for a moment too. Cause we don't. Maybe in other countries cops can grab onto people and make them pee into cups but that was not in my job description or scope of authority.







Motorcycle crash. A typical one; it was the fault of the rider. He wasn't too messed up but his bike got smashed and his shoe had gotten mashed into the frame and was jammed in there pretty good. The rider was able to get his foot out afterward, but his twisted shoe had become one with the bike, so to speak. That was kind of unusual. I'll bet his foot really hurt after that.





I was at the office typing a police report. There was a electrical surge, caused by another blown power line transformer. No wind storm going on, so probably another stupid squirrel on a power pole had caused it. The office battery backups activated immediately, so the report I was working on did not disappear. The building's emergency generator also kicked on, so all was well. Except I knew that some 911 calls were coming. Sure enough, a few minutes later CenCom started receiving calls from various alarm companies, reporting alarm activations at some of the local businesses.





A few times per year a power outage would knock out all the traffic lights at one or more of our major traffic intersections. Either the traffic lights would default to all-way blinking red, or they would just all go dark. Most of the drivers would notice the change, but when the lights went all dark there would always be oblivious drivers who would just drive through at full speed. Invariably, people would call 911 and demand an officer be dispatched to the intersection to manually direct traffic. Not a bad idea, but when 7 intersections need attention and there are only 2 patrol officers on duty - who need to respond to other 911 calls - well the intersections are going to be neglected. The police chief was frankly unapologetic when explaining this to citizens: "Do you know how incredibly dangerous it is to put an officer on foot in the middle of a major intersection? One that has four through lanes and two turn lanes running north to south, and two through lanes and two turn lanes east to west?!?"



Svetlana was at the police department's front counter again, complaining again about how the KGB and the CIA were still stalking her with electronic signals, as part of a huge conspiracy to ruin her life. I handed her another statement form to fill out, which she did. Took her about 20 minutes to write some more stuff down. I barely read it when she handed it back to me; it was just a bunch of blathering nonsense like she always wrote. I added her latest statement into our special filing system and she walked out, feeling a little bit better that she could vent again to the police. And yes, we did send mental health professionals to her house regularly to check in on her, and they did what they could for her.







“Sir the reason why I pulled you over is because you did not stop completely at the last two stop signs you drove past.” Driver: “I’m sorry officer, I don’t really feel good. I just crapped my pants.”



I stopped a driver once for running a red light. I walked up the car and before I could say anything the driver immediately yelled to me “It was green and I want your badge number!”



Quote from a driver I had stopped for speeding; I see he’s holding a court-mandated in-car alcohol breath tester for what could only be for a recent DUI conviction: “My driving record? Yeah, it’s actually pretty good.”



A driver ran a stop sign badly enough for me to pull her over and have a little corrective chat. I see right away by her clothes and name badge she's wearing that she's an employee at one of the three local nursing homes. So I don't give her a ticket. Because I decided long ago that anybody who works in a nursing home taking care of old people for not nearly enough money is not going to a ticket from me for a minor traffic violation. God bless those folks, you know?







Car chase time! Several different police officers including municipal cops, sheriff's deputies, and tribal cops are all trying to catch a guy in his speeding car but he recklessly outruns and eludes us all; sometimes he goes a few minutes between sightings and then the chase is on again. Eventually he decides to ditch the car down a long dirt road and try his luck on foot. He gets caught a short time later several hundred yards away. A police tracking dog is called to scene of the ditched car. The dog starts his track, goes through the woods, and follows the trail directly to the back seat of the police car where the bad guy is in cuffs. It was pretty fun to watch; the handler purposely was trying to ignore that patrol car and keep the dog going but the goodest boy yanked his leash back to that patrol car and insisted the trail ended there; great entertainment for the several officers present, watching. And the guy in custody tried yelling at us that it was all bullshit and a set up and the dog was being manipulated.



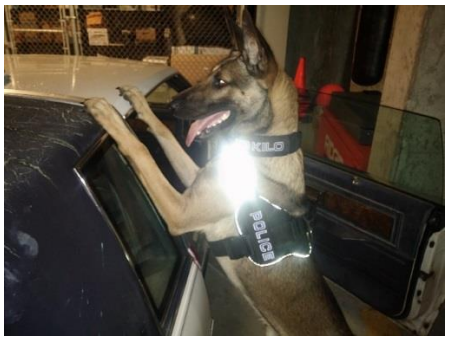




I was checking on a residence at the request of the homeowner who was away on vacation. I found an open sliding glass door in the back, which was weird. I cautiously went in and announced my presence which was a good thing because my "Officer Hoke, Poulsbo Police Department is anybody here?" was met with a surprised "Yeah, I'm here!" in the living room. I don't know who was more surprised to see who – me, or the guy in the living room who lived there. Not the guy on vacation. Turns out the guy on vacation had the same stupid house number as this guy, but with a "Place" in the address instead of a "Court". My confusion was justified; both houses were so close they were within sight of each other. "That's okay," the homeowner told me: "I get that other guys' mail by mistake just all the time."







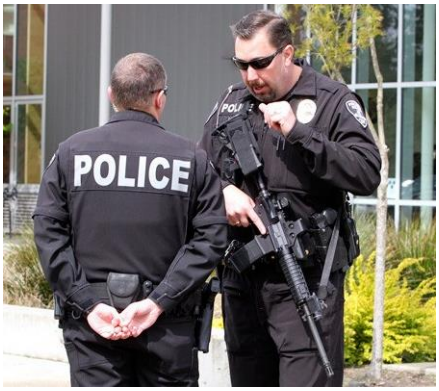
Crazy guy on a transit bus: the bus driver calls his dispatcher, who calls 911 for him and I show up at the bus stop with another officer. While trying to get crazy guy off the bus I slipped and half fell out of the bus, badly scraping my shin on the hard edge of the step onto/off of the bus. I had a red visible scrape mark on my right shin for well over two goddamn years.

On routine patrol, I spot the strangest-looking dog I'd ever seen wandering in the roadway. Turns out it was a potbellied pig; the kind with little tusks. Pig had gotten loose from his yard and was lost. I corralled it and helped an animal control officer load it into his van. Did you know that potbellied pigs will squeal really, really loudly when you load them into an animal control van? The chief posted a picture on twitter and the next day a news crew from KOMO in Seattle came out to interview me and the pig, which had been reunited back with its owner on the farm. If you google "Mr. Wiggles KOMO" you can see the short video they produced and aired. Kinda silly, but there are much worse ways for an officer to get on TV, so I won't complain at all.





Me, with a drug user in custody. He's got a small baggie of what sure looks like crystal meth. Unfortunately for him I have a way to tell for sure: in my patrol car trunk I have some small one-use in-field testing kits for just this sort of thing. It's a simple matter of opening the top of the kit – a clear plastic pouch about the size of a container of tic-tacs- and dropping in just a tiny little bit of the meth. Seal it shut, break open a glass ampule containing a liquid chemical reagent. Slosh it around a bit, and break open glass ampule #2, again mix it all together. Then break open the last ampule and watch to see what color the liquid turns to show a positive or negative result. Virtually every time I tested drugs, it was a positive confirmation, although sometimes I'd have to test two or three samples to determine if what we had was white powder heroin or cocaine or meth or something else; each specific drug required a specific test kit. Only once did a broken glass shard from an ampule pierce the plastic pouch and poke my finger through it. After that incident I used my metal baton to open the ampules in there.







Because our department was an early adopter of the police bodycam technology, we attracted the attention of a local Seattle news reporter who was working for Al Jazeera America, Seattle Bureau. He came over to Poulsbo and interviewed me, and rode around for a bit in my patrol car while I demonstrated how we were using and adjusting to the new norm of recording things on bodycams. I don't know how many times the news story ran on the national channel, and it's not on youtube but I did save a copy of that video for the grandkids to enjoy someday.













While on routine patrol, I saw the weidest thing in an a covered apartment parking lot one night: a parked gyrocopter. A very small one; too small even for a cabin. Looked like a Benson X-25A. Of course it wasn't flying..it was just parked there. I checked in on it regularly and then one day after a few months it was gone and never came back.

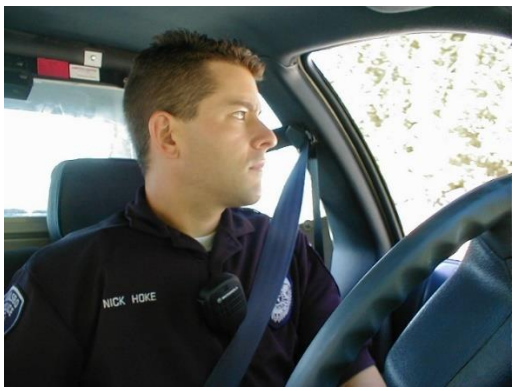


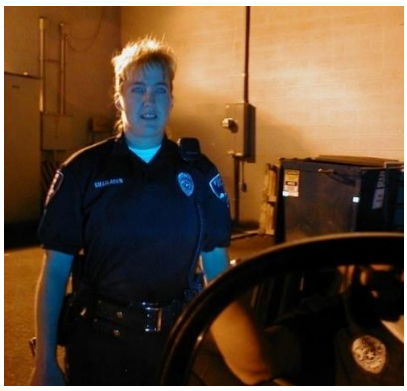


There we were at the firearms range, shooting our new Glocks, making little holes in the target papers. One of the reserve officers had an aftermarket not OEM magazine and it somehow misfed a cartridge round in the chamber incorrectly, causing the bullet casing to burst out via a partly open ejection port and get blown into pieces; resulting in a shrapnel hit just below his eye. Yikes.



The only other real injury I saw while shooting at the firearms range was when another reserve officer held his gun up too close to his head during a close quarters building search simulation; he had the back of the gun just a couple inches from his face and when the slide recoiled back, it smacked him right between his eyes. A fast-thinking range instructor made him pose for a photo, which was hilarious. Looked like a bloody snake bite above the ridge of his nose.







Mom finds drugs in living room; blames 16 year old daughter. Calls police. I respond with another officer and the teenager, confronted with the evidence, resorts to the tactic of trying to convince us that the drugs really belonged to her mom, and that mom was clearly trying to set her up.

Throughout my career I was regularly and pleasantly surprised by how polite people were to me after I pulled them over for traffic violations. I had a lot of people apologize profusely to me, and too many people to count even thanked me. A lot of them even after I handed them a ticket. One guy even told – with complete sincerity – "Keep up the good work, officer."






An unfortunate crime victim had her purse stolen from church. Then the thieves, using her stolen car keys, found her car the next day at her workplace (elementary school) and stole that, too. That was seriously not cool at all.





A large, expensive grant-funded utility trailer was acquired by the PPD. Black, shiny, brand-new, dual axle, ready for graphics on the sides. The officer in charge of ordering it waited a few weeks for it to be ready and he then picked it up from the dealer in another county and towed it back. And then discovered it was several inches too tall to fit into our parking garage. He had ordered the wrong size trailer. Should have got the shorter version. A couple other officers and myself who were present at the moment, offered our condolences and sympathy. Actually, we were ROFL at his massive fuck up, which was of course very preventable. The chief of police made him drive it back and arrangements were made to get a smaller and shorter trailer.






Classic Nick Hoke prank: from time to time an officer (or better yet, the Chief) would get into his patrol in the garage, turn the ignition key on, and get rewarded with the FM radio being quite unexpectedly turned on and tuned in to the one Seattle station that was in all Spanish, with the crazy Mexican music playing. At full volume, of course.





Guy decided to dispose of his old motorhome in his back 40 by..burning it. I showed up with the fire department. Not amused.

Reminded me of the time a different guy tried the same method with his old abandoned and rotten single wide mobile home.





Drug dealer idiot piece of shit fella is spotted in the library; the librarians didn't like his attitude and wanted him kicked out. I responded with another officer and we walk up to him; he's surfing on the internet and focused on the screen. He looks up and sees the other officer walking toward him, so he quickly dives into a pocket, takes out his heroin, and passes it to his friend sitting next to him. Unfortunately for him, the friend was quite befuddled to be suddenly and with no logical reason presented with a bag of heroin, so he paused just long enough for me to reach down and intercept it. Because I was standing about two feet behind both of them. Idiot dealer went off to jail, again. I felt pretty good about that one.







A local business owner and the HR head called me with a delicate situation: they had a brand new employee who had just failed his background check; turns out he had a warrant for his arrest. Which for that particular company was significant problem; they had pretty strict employee standards. They called him out to the parking lot and I arrested him and took him to jail. He had only been employed there for two days. He did not get to go back.





At a family get-together one day I was telling a story about a motorcyclist who had successfully outrun me while I was trying to catch him. Two of my older brothers in law then shared stories about the good old days when they were in their late teens or early 20's and they both outran police officers that tried to pull them over; they were on motorcycles at the time so they were able to easily get away. They thought that was hilarious. Me, being a cop, I didn't really share their amusement of those stories.



Private school principal called 911; a child was missing. I responded and they tell me that a parent had come to pick up her 5th grader, and she had brought her toddler with her, who was now missing. The mom was freaking out of course, and pretty much the entire school staff had already torn the school upside down in a frantic effort to find the kid; they even opened up every cupboard and cabinet door, which of course took awhile. Kid is still MIA. I call for my sergeant, who calls for more officers. The mom tearfully calls her husband at home to fill him in that, uh, she lost their kid. "What are you talking about?" I heard him ask her on the phone. "He's right here with me!" She froze in confusion and he explained to her "You never left the house with him!"



One of my coworkers stopped a car for a moving violation and the driver, a white lady, immediately started yelling at the officer that the only reason why he stopped her was because her passenger was a black man. My coworker tried to point out to her that he was actually not a racist, and it was the middle of the night, he was behind her car, and he had not the faintest idea what race her passenger was nor would he care anyway. But she was having none of it, her mind was set, she had a race card and she was going! to! use it! Sigh…there are people out there like that.







Director of the kidney dialisis center was upset that a client, an indigent state-sponsored skankerella, was not only showing up to every appointment completely whacked-out on heroin, but she was also shooting up in their parking lot right before coming in. I suggested that they just revoke her priveliges there but the director explained she had a state contract and could not refuse services, which for skankarella were literally life-saving. So I had a chat with the junkie, and told her that for her next appointment there was going to be a drug-sniffing dog present (okay that was a ruse) and that undercover cops in unmarked cars were also going to be watching her in the parking lot. (yes, also a ruse) By the way, dialysis cleans blood, right? Wouldn't shooting heroin into your veins right before than proceedure be like, a waste of perfectly good heroin?

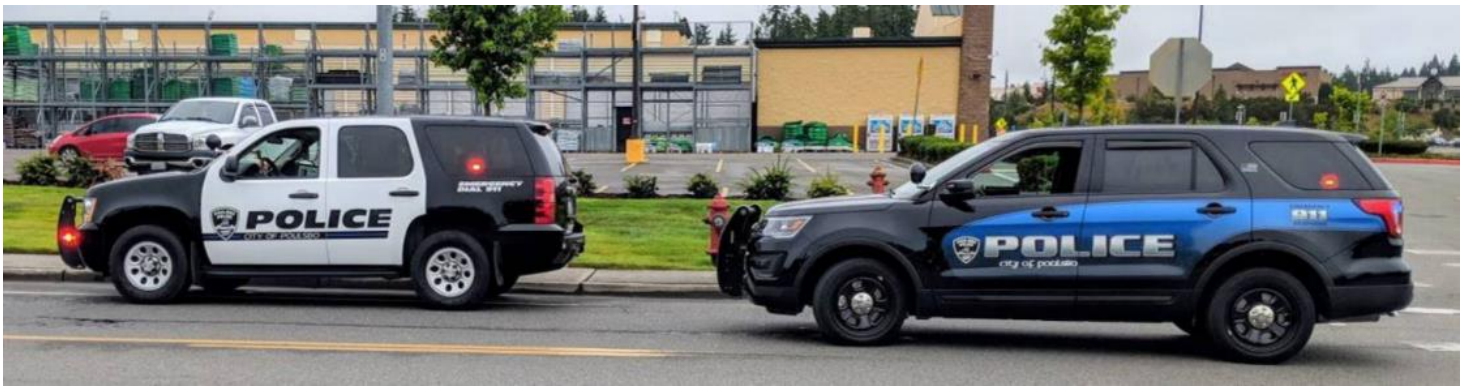






Two guys on a small boat leave the Suquamish tribal casino late at night, and motor over to Poulsbo. Upon arrival, half the guys on the boat discover that the other half are no longer on board. Police get called. The guy driving the boat tells us that the other guy, drunk, must have fallen off at some point and drowned. Well now isn't that just suspicious as hell. A few days later the missing guy's body washed up on shore. No obvious trauma, looks like he did indeed just fall off the boat. Or was he pushed?

Traffic stop: I asked the violator "What's your driving record like?" Honest answer: "I have 8 warnings from when I was younger."



I'm at the police station with a 17 year kid in custody who had been caught stealing alcohol from a store. His disappointed parents show up to take him home and they get extra disappointed when I tell them that if they're expecting the criminal justice system to really make an impression and change his behaviors, it probably won't happen; the juvenile prosecutors office was notorious for declining to file charges in a lot of cases, or they would offer a deferred prosection, or they'd let him plead down to a much lighter charge with a more lenient sentence, and if any of that happened it would take weeks or months. The parents asked if I could scare him straight right then and there, and they were in luck because that was one of my specialites. If five minute's of unpleasantness could steer a kid in the better direction, I'll try it. So after a private convesation with the parents, they wave goodbye to their son and then leave. Then alone with the little miscreant, I told the kid that he's going to juvenile detention, which, being a new modern facility, looked pretty much exactly like a "real jail." I told him that since it was a Thursday, the first opportunity to see a judge would be on Monday, but the corrections staff might let him have a book or two in his cell during the long weekend. Then I told him that if he plead guilty right away, he could serve his sentence (another couple weeks) and then the whole ordeal would be over before the end of the month. And I let him think about that for a long time. The poor kid thought about it enough to start crying, which was a very good sign that he was already re evaluating his decisions. I then left him alone for a few minutes to go outside to talk to the parents who were waiting. I updated them and then we all went back in to see the kid, still handcuffed and quietly crying. I then dropped a bombshell on the kid and told him that an incredible thing had just happened; his parents had just managed to talk me out of taking him to jail. And I was going to release him to mom and dad immediately. I added that of course this was conditional that he follow their rules, and he was more than agreeable because the teen was so relieved he started crying more. I told him how lucky he was that his parents loved him, and made it very clear that they were literally saving him right now. He agreed he had just the best parents in the world. "I'm glad you recognize that," I said. "Now go give your mother a hug." Did that kid ever get caught again? Nope. How many times did I do that technique with kids of all ages? Many, many times. Enough to make me think that at least one family, ten years later, must have surely brought it up at a Thanksgiving Dinner or something: "Hey remember that time you almost went to jail and we saved your ass? Yeah, you totally were not going to jail anyway, we just wanted to teach a quick lesson!"







Me, searching an arrestee. (That's what you can call somebody wearing handcuffs, one step past "detained"..) Me, finding drugs in a pocket. Arrestee: "Wow, I did not know that was there. I don't even know what that is. Because, Officer, these are not my pants." I have heard this line, incredibly, about 7 times over the course of my career. Amused me greatly every single time. "How can these pants be not yours when you're wearing them?" I ask. "Oh, I just grabbed some pants off the floor and these must belong to my room mate." The line "these are not my pants" is actually one of the most common stupid excuses that all cops hear multiple times sooner or later. Variations include "This is not my purse," and "this is not my shirt," and "this is not my jacket," and "this is not my car."






Me, on duty, with my police dog next to me. Out in public. A citizen walks up to me and starts talking about the fact that they own a dog. And their dog is so smart. Like, soooooo smart. Their dog could totally be a police dog, it's so smart. Their dog can sniff just anything, and so their dog would be the greatest drug dog just ever, their dog was so good, with the best nose just ever. I smile and nod. How many times did I have to listen to variations of that – people bragging about how their dogs would make great police dogs? Uh, about once month, sometimes more.






A homeowner called 911 for some help; she had a professional house appraiser on site to figure out the value of the place. The appraiser needed to get photographs of every room. In a back bedroom though, a rentor had barricaded herself in there and was refusing to let the apprasier in. I told the owner that I could not force anybody to do anything; the renter could legally keep her door closed if she wanted. The appraiser told the owner she would not be able to value the home unless/until the renter let her look in there, and so she would have to come back some other time when the renter was not literally yelling and screaming at all three of us from behind her door. After some negotiating though we wore the renter down and she relented, and let the appraiser go in for about ten seconds to snap from photos. Yeah, the renter was a complete mental crack whore.







In honor of breast cancer awareness month, the chief of police got special shoulder patches made in pink. I took it one step further and added a matching pink undershirt, visible under my collar. I only lasted three days though; I ditched it and went back to my black t-shirt because exactly zero citizens commented on my new pink color scheme. I was almost certain they missed seeing the shoulder patches and only noticed my pink t-shirt, which I'm sure they thought was due to a laundry accident.





Some years I met no dead people, but my annual average was one or two. One year though there were a half-dozen dead folks found during the times I was on duty: two old people - one in a bed, one on a floor - two middle aged people - one in a boat, one in a motorhome - and two young people - one accidental overdose and one suicide in a college bathroom.





High school kid's video camera tape recording (yes, actual video camera with magnetic tape cassette) was seized by the school principal because reasons. On the tape were a series of jackass-style stunts, to include emptying recycle bins full of bottles out in roadways, and jumping into a swimming pool while on fire. The prosecutor couldn't file any charges on either because there was no identified victims, which really upset me. Also on the tape: the kid went to a grocery store late at night, bought some things and then had his friend tape him eating hot peppers, and drinking (almost) an entire gallon of milk. The store's night manager kicked them both out of the store just in time; the kid made it to the parking lot and then puked up 3.5 quarts of milk.







Homeowner reported burglar(s) had broken into her house while she was gone for the weekend. I showed up and we found nothing missing. Entry was through a window. The burglar(s?) had cleaned up all the broken glass and put it in the garbage, which was certainly a little unusual. Oh, the suspect(s) had also slept in her bed. And then cleaned the linens in the washing machine. That was not my first head-scratching bizarre case like that.







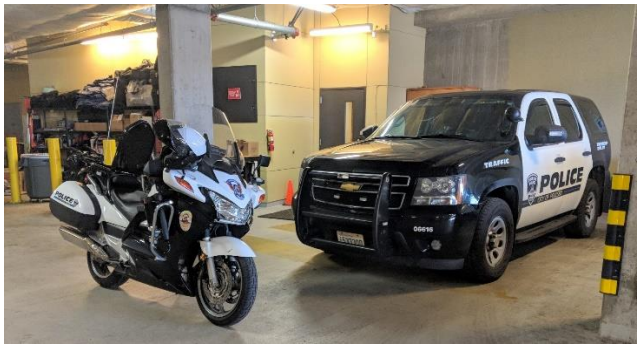
Auto parts store manager had caught an embezzling employee during an audit. Employee was confronted and admitted pocketing several hundred dollars in customer return refunds. The regional manager wanted a police report filed so the fired employee would get charged with a crime. I knew the jail would not hold him more than few hours; not worth my time or effort to drive him there. But I figured it would be good if somebody in his family knew he'd been a bad boy, so I made him call his wife and self-report himself to her. Which he did. Witnessing that part was equal parts sad, and rewarding. Then I released him.







Late at night; I've caught a driver who it turns out has no valid license. Too many traffic violations unanswered in court. So a tow truck is called for his car. His very drunk fiancé in the passenger seat is having a hard time understanding what is going on. In an effort to explain it all, we tell her that the driver, her fiancé, had two DUI convictions on his drivers record. She had not known about that. She was pretty shocked. She sobered up pretty quickly and I could see the look her face; clearly some doubts about her recent life decisions were being evaluated there by the side of the road.

Here's a fun thing to do with a police car mounted radar antenna/transmitter, while driving around on patrol in a police car: Activate the radar beam while behind a driver who has got a visible radar detector unit that is on, and suction cupped to their windshield. Watch the display on their radar detector light up like a little christmas tree. Watch the driver suddnely jam on their brakes and start looking around everywhere for the police car. Watch their eyes when they finally look in the rearview mirror and see the police car is right behind them. Speeding is not necessary or required; it's equally fun when somebody is just at stop in traffic waiting for a green light.




A teen driver had crashed into another car, because she did not know how to drive. I told her that several times. Since she did not even have a learners permit yet, she had to agree with me. I was kind of especially upset with her because the car she had hit was a jeep with a lift kit, extra large tires, and it was painted in a bright fluorescent hi-visibility lime green that was, I pointed out to her, the most highly visible colored vehicle in the whole damn city. I felt bad for the driver of the jeep, no doubt the jeep dealer had slapped the side of that jeep when he sold it to him and announced "You'll be super safe in this one - ain't nobody ever gonna miss seeing ya."





Old lady hit the gas pedal instead of the brake pedal right in front of a strip mall and plowed her car through the plate glass windows, right into a pizza joint. A bench seat inside slowed her down pretty well, so she didn't crash into the counter. Good thing nobody had been sitting on that bench at that moment.





I pulled a guy over for speeding. He was Russian, and had a perfect great Russian accent. I pointed to his radar detector and asked him about it. "Oh, that.." he said *(you're reading this in a Russian accent, right?)* "That thing does not work at all." And then, not 3 seconds later, before I could reply, his radar detector picked up a radar signal from another nearby cop. The words were barely out of his mouth when his detector started beeping and chirping and blasting bright red numbers and letters and symbols in its display. It was a hilariously glorious moment, complete with the "oh shit" look on his face.





Traffic enforcement time: I catch a violator, and ask my usual question "How is your driving record?" Everybody asked this question presumes I can find out, so they always reply truthfully. His response: "Uh, you caught me doing this last month."







A shoplifter struck at a boutique downtown. Her license plate was recorded, I look her up and get a copy of her drivers license photo. I compare it to the surveillance recording from inside the store. Unfortunately for her, she was wearing in both her DOL photo and her shoplifting event, the exact same very distinctive striped shirt. Turns out she was a doctor's housewife, bored, looking for a little excitement.






Laywers's office on fire in the middle of the night. It was arson, caused by a disgruntled former employee. Fire department put out the fire. But missed a small smoldering hot spot in an inside wall, which about an hour later reignited and turned into a fire bigger than before. It wound up destroying the building. After that, the fire department invested in a thermal imager which they used after every fire call to make sure they wouldn't get embarrased like that again.





Several times during my career I've had the very minor distinction of being the first officer to arrest and handcuff a young person for a crime that needed arresting for – and then those young people grow older (but not wiser) and turn into career criminals, and eventually wind up in prison for a long time. And I'd reminisce and go "Yeah, of that's moron's 38 arrests, I was his first…"



I've also arrested a lot of folks who got a variation of this line from me: "You know, I think I've caught you now more times than I caught and arrested your father."







Me: "Good morning, I'm recording this on my camera, the reason why I pulled you over is you're not wearing your seatbelt."
Driver: "I just got a ticket for that last week! Here, I'll show it to you!"







Me, opening a shed door at night and finding my client; he's on the phone talking to the 911 dispatcher, who is trying to keep him from killing himself. Dude is standing on a stepladder and he's got a noose snug around his neck; the other end is tied tight on to a beam above his head. I quickly grab onto his legs to keep him from doing anything regrettable and the other officer with me got out his knife and he cut the rope between the beam and his neck.







Crazy woman was swearing like mad into a public pay phone. (Back in the days when we had pay phones.) I arrested her for disorderly conduct. The city prosecutor filed a charge against her, and the public defender took it to trial. Public defender got the charge dismissed when he established that no other citizens aside from me had been subjected to her profanity…so therefore there was in fact no crime. Because police officers are can't be offended by language like that. She later wound up killing herself, because her life was a wreck. She and her outlaw husband had spawned two boys who later grew up to amass over a hundred criminal charges between just the two of them before one died of an overdose a week after getting out of prison. Between all four of those idiots, I had about ten arrests on them myself.





Me, booking a client into the jail for a serious criminal offense. Jail intake staff refused to accept him though because he had a nasty-looking infection on his foot. They directed me to take him to the hospital for clearance first. So I had to take the guy to the ER where I learned that if a police officer brings in a patient who is wearing handcuffs, that does not qualify in any way for head of the line privileges. I had to wait for about 90 minutes before a doctor would see him…another hour to get looked at, medication prescribed, then discharged…then back to the jail finally, hours behind schedule. I hated it when that happened.



Woman stole a purse and used the victim's credit cards to buy some swag from JC Penny at the mall. I went to JC Penny and talked to the security officer who told me that she had the suspect on video, but she could not share the video with me because JC Penny valued the privacy of their patrons. The only way to see the video would be with a search warrant. Which is much easier to say than do. So I told the security officer that the suspect had also stolen the victim's car keys and it would great to see the video of suspect; she might be identifiable by the video alone and we could catch her before the car got stolen. Security guard explained she would get fired for violating the company policy, so…no video. Later that day, the victims' car was indeed then stolen. I wrote a scathing email to the JC Penny security guard – not mad at her, but directed to the corporate office. She forwarded it up to her supervisors and the next day she got back to me. My letter had been pretty persuasive and it convinced the decision makers at corporate somewhere that withholding video that the police need was probably not the best policy; from then on their rule about having to get a search warrant first was thrown out. So that's how progress is made, sometimes.



Lady came to the police department counter and reported her dentist was up to no good; she showed me the posts he had screwed into her jaw, to add some fake teeth to. She said those posts were definitely receivers that were picking up the secret radio waves that were broadcasting the voices into her head. She also said the that Secretary of Defense had given her a highly classified microdot of microfilm for safekeeping; she had it stashed in her sewing machine. Oh and also her father was (secretly of course) JFK. I wanted to ask her if her mother was Marilyn Monroe but she then abruptly left before I could ask questions.





Woman got caught stealing from a grocery store. She said she needed food for her children. I got called and noticed that amidst the food she had lifted, she also had a lot of candles in her cart, so of course I had to ask her if she was feeding candles to her kids. She said no. I asked her if she had gone to the food bank for free food and she said no. So my sympathy evaporated for her pretty quickly. She was also freaking out a bit because her kids were waiting for her in her car and we had been in the store security office for too long. Which made me even less impressed with her. So I told her she was going to jail, and she'd need to call her husband to pick up the kids. He was a chef at nearby restaurant. It was of course super inconvenient for him to leave his job, but she called him. Now, I had no actual intention of booking her into the jail; I didn't even handcuff her. But I suspected if I let her go, she'd never mention a word of this incident to anybody, and when she got in the mail her summons to appear in court she'd probably make up some reason to her husband why she had to go out take care of business. I felt it would be in her best interest to have a little more accountability and oversight in her life, so that's why we got the husband involved. After she had to explain to him that was going to jail for being a thief, I told them that jeez I had changed my mind about that and actually she was free to go – released on her personal recognizance to appear in court when ordered to do so later. Was that whole thing a dick move on my part? Nah. I don't feel bad about that at all; she needed help and the best person to help was her husband, so absolutely we should not leave him out of it. And yes, I did that tactic with many, many other deserving folks.






Safeway manager called to report a theft of liquor; somebody was going after the high-end top-shelf bottles of the expensive spirits. The manager got him on video, a fat kid about 23 years old, loading down baskets one at a time, he boldly carried them right out to his car, skipping the whole paying for it part. Multiple trips. His license plate was recorded by a citizen. I went to the kids' house. He confessed. He had almost a dozen Safeway shopping baskets in his bedroom. And the liquor? He still had most of it; he only drank a little and was not even reselling it or anything. Just out looking for thrills, apparently.







Patrol check for a wide open door at a residence: I go check it out and find the door won't close because it's laying on the floor in the living room. Nobody is home; the kids are at school and the single mom was at work. Being a shipyard worker, for some reason she didn't want to take her wallet to work. So she just left it on the living room coffee table, stuffed full of cash and credit cards. With, uh, the front door broken on the floor. I called her at work and she said one of the kids had destroyed the door so she just had left it there like that.






I got dispatched to a hit and run motor vehicle collison that just happened in the interesection of 305 at 307. As I was enroute to the scene to talk to the victim, the other driver called 911 to report a hit and run. Weird, but okay, both drivers are accounted for, this should be easy to resolve. Turns out both callers were both victims in two completely separate hit and run collisions, same intersection, about 4 minutes apart. Both of the causing drivers – yes, two completely different ones – had fled the scene. What are the odds. Well on that day, pretty low.





Several times during my career, citizens turned in to the police department found dogs. If they had no tags, we'd call for Animal Control to come pick them up and hold on to them. (the dogs, not the citizens..) If the dogs were especially friendly or good looking, I'd take them out on patrol ride alongs with me instead making them wait in an interview room at the PD for a couple hours. Cause I'm a dog guy.







Local idiot whacked out on meth is wandering around in a residential area, looking in vain for his crack whore girlfriend, making a nuisance of himself by knocking on too many doors very early in the morning. He went down a back alley and found a guy working on his back deck; idiot asked the guy where his girlfriend was and the guy, seeing this idiot was not in his right state of mind, told him to get lost. Meth head idiot walked off. Man on deck feels uneasy so went into his house to get his gun. Forgot to close the glass sliding door behind him. Meth idiot moron followed him in, on a quest to get his girl back. The homeowner did not hear the idiot walk into his house, because the homeowner was upstairs getting his safe open to produce his very large revolver. Whacked out idiot wanders into downstairs bedroom and woke up the wife sleeping in the bed, who was not, as it turns out, his girlfriend. She screamed. Husband upstairs gets revolver out of safe. Idiot on meth has a couple working brain cells connect, and decides he should exit the residence. He made it out and ran away before the homeowner, now armed, could make it downstairs with his revolver. Idiot got away but we caught him a couple blocks later. Myself and the other officers all agreed that if the homeowner had shot that dude, and the homeowner could articulate that is was in justifiable self defense, he would have had our complete approval.

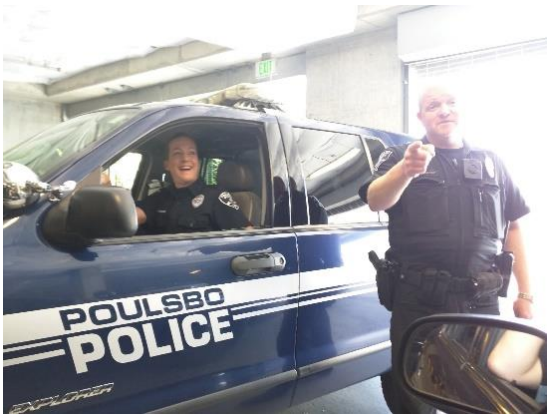








People were getting scam letters from "The Publishers Clearing House" saying they had won, and if they could deposit the enclosed check that would be a great first step. Step two would be to then send a couple hundred bucks to an address in New York. The recipients of these letters were all in the Midwest. The checks were from a "sponsoring partner" which is this case was a completely random carpet company in my jurisdiction. When I called the carpet company they were already well aware that their name and address was being used on completely worthless checks to try and scam people on the other side of the country.





Teenager got fired from a bakery. He felt it was unjustified so he decided to picket. With a big sign accusing the owner of the bakery - an old German guy – of being a Nazi. This was a little embarrassing for the teen's mother, who happened to be on the city council at the time.







Room-renting tenant was freaking out that her room mate/landlord had gone MIA over the weekend. Filed a police report. Impressed the police that something terrible must have happened. The police (me) spent a couple long days trying to find the missing landlord. I eventually got a working phone number for her and found she was alive and well, and on vacation in Eastern Washington, and quite flummoxed that I had been leaving messages with all her relatives. Turns out the massive over reaction freakout from the renter was because, it turned out, she was pretty mentally ill. Landlord kicked her out after that.





Officer Casey took off his external tactical load bearing vest while typing in the office. He thought it would be okay to leave it unattended in my presence. He was wrong about that. When I noticed it on the work counter all alone, I thought it would hilarious to add something heavy to it. I quickly started looking around the office for something heavy I could add in it; ideally something flat and unobtrusive. Another officer bemusedly watching me helpfully suggested that the tool chest out in the motor pool garage would be a good source. I ran out there and looked at some heavy wrenches and decided that for some reason, several smaller, but equally heavy rachet sockets would work. I quickly stuffed them into one of the inside pockets of Casey's vest and I was greatly rewarded a few minutes later when he came back into the squad room, put on his vest, and did not notice the extra bulge and weight in the middle on the inside, and walked off. It actually took him several days to notice those things.



A couple weeks later, Casey has stupidly left his vest on the counter again while he was taking a load off in the office. As soon as he left the room I sprung into action; no time to get any tools from the garage but there was always an-on hand supply of large dog biscuits in the work room; donations from citizens to the K9 program. I quickly loaded up his vest with milkbones; one in an outside notebook pocket, and one inside in the hidden pocket.

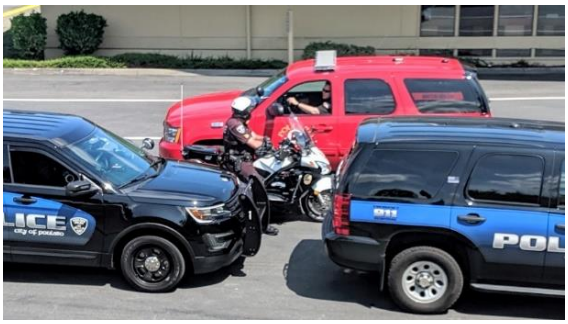


He found the one in the outside pocket but never felt or found the one inside. He didn't even check that pocket when he emptied his vest of all the gear and equipment and threw it in the washing machine a week later. We learned that dog biscuits in tactical vests will survive a washing machine experience; it's going to be in the clothes dryer when they fall apart and make a godawful mess. To the extreme displeasure of his wife. Who divorced him a short time after that.

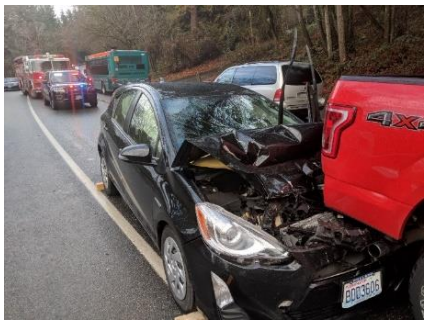




I had a client in custody, and I booked him into the jail. I was talking to a couple of the corrections officers there and saw over in the women's section my stepmothers' niece. She was serving her one year sentence for trying to drive while drunk and stoned on marijuana so badly that her boyfriend had refused to get in the car with her. She had slammed pretty much head-on into a car on the highway, badly injuring the other driver who was a naval doctor. He was a hand surgeon. And the accident broke both of his hands. That's pretty damn shitty. Anyway, there she was in the jail, having gone to trial and lost, and I noted she was wearing not green or orange prisoner clothing, but red. Because she was being a pain the ass to the staff and had been classified as a troublemaker. I'll always feel bad for that poor doctor; he was out of work for a long time, recovering from his injuries. Actually, I don't know if ever did completely recover. Hey kids don't get stoned and drunk and try drive a car, FFS.







Teen driver crashed into another car. I got called. Nothing spectactular, just a little fender bender. The other driver was getting concerned that the teenager couldn't produce an insurance card. I knew the girl and her dad and assured the driver that girl had excellent coverage, and father was coming to the take care of just absolutely everything. And he did, because he was the owner of a local insurance company. (And yes,we all agreed it was kind of hilarously ironic that there wasn't an insurance card in his daughter's glove box!)









Quilt shop owner called to report a theft. Some gal had wandered into the store, acted real nice and polite, and then when the shop owner let her guard down and let the woman browse for a bit unattended, the thief grabbed 3 medium sized quilts valued at $800 each, and then made a clean getaway. I was never able to identify or catch her.



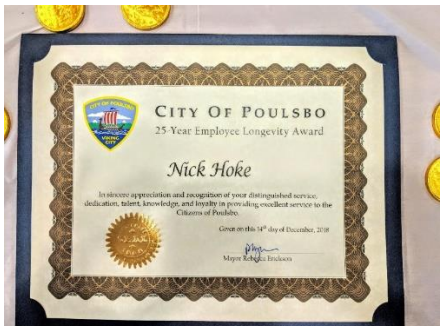
One of my coworkers caught a guy walking down the street; a fugitive with a warrant. The suspect was detained and my coworker asked me to go to the office and confirm the warrant in the file drawer. I did, and so then the guy got officially arrested. At the jail, we realized he had a different offense; turns out there that in the file drawer we had another warrant file for another completely different guy who had the same first, middle, and last name. And that, kids, is why we also check the date of birth when confirming warrants. Because sometimes people the exact same names. Again, what were the odds? Well, on that day, pretty low.





Same coworker wrote a speeding ticket to a woman going too fast into work. Her 'Don't you know who I am?" statement did not get her out of ticket- she was the City's finance manager. I thought it was hilarious that he didn't know her. Equally hilarious; she got a ticket.







Do enough traffic enforcement and sooner or later you'll pull over an off-duty cop or two. Or eventually a dozen. Or a prosecutor. Or a sheriff's deputy. Or the sheriff himself. Or a mayor. Or in my case, all of the above.



I responded to a domestic dispute; a husband and wife were arguing with each other. They had both called 911. Upon arrival I note in the driveway not one, not two, but three crappy boats tarped over. That's a sign this couple does not have their shit together. Turns out he is a professional mental health counselor. And she is, uh, also a professional mental health counselor. They are not getting along. They need...counseling. Because they triggered each other when he suggested she might be on the autism spectrum and she, getting all super indignant that he is suggesting a diagnosis, threatened to report his ass to the American Psychological Association! For making an unqualified diagnosis! The other officer suggested they go find a marriage counselor. I suggested they go find a divorce lawyer.





A woman called 911 and wanted to talk to a police officer. My partner called her back and I listened in on the speakerphone in the office. She wanted to report a man in her church congregation was supposedly a registered sex offender in another state but maybe not in this state and it was not cool at all that he was in church now, where kids were present. My partner, slightly flummoxed, pointed out to her that if the church leadership was okay with him being there, then they could do that. This made the woman quite upset that the police were clearly not going to help her. She then hung up.







Me, on patrol. Day shift. It's snowing heavily, and it caught a lot of motorists off guard, including a gasoline tanker truck with a double trailer. The driver got stuck on the highway because there was just enough of a slight uphill grade, combined with new snow, for him to lose all forward traction. To make it extra interesting, everytime he tried to get going, the spinning wheels moved the trailers just enough for them to start sliding sideways a few feet. Myself and the other officer on duty realized that he was going to have to stay there until the snow plows and sanders could show up, which they did after a couple of hours.

A heroin dealer is arrested, and the police want to search his car. He refuses consent, so his car his impounded, a search warrant is presented to a judge, and the judge agrees there is enough probable cause to search the car. (This whole process actually tooka couple of day, as usual..) So the police search his car. A large container full of glitter is encountered. Could there be drugs in there? Yes of course, we must check! During the checking of the container for drugs, the contents may have been completely spilled out into the car. By accident, of course. Hmm..no drugs were in there. Boy, that sure made a mess though.



A cop I knew had been promoted to a Commander rank, and he was in charge of a lot of things at his police agency. He discovered that he was in a position to exploit a weakness in the evidence room audit procedures, allowing him to pocket tens of thousands of dollars over a couple years. An internal audit noticed something fishy, and the FBI started an investigation. The day before they were going to bust him, he got tipped off somehow. The FBI agents were already watching him closely, and they were quite alarmed and excited to see him that night driving liking a madman, stopping at random garbage dumpsters to throw in bags of evidence that he hoped to quickly get rid of. He got arrested, charged, went to trial, convicted, and wound up in prison.



Speaking of bookkeeping flaws, we had a municipal court administrator once who figured out she could receive cash payments from convicted criminals, and note in the record book that instead of cash they were showing her proof of community service instead. She embezzled well over $100,000 dollars over a seven year period. She too went off to prison for that.







Me, talking to a man with a bloody face. He was, of all things, the owner of an art boutique downtown. There had been a dispute with one of his commissioned artists that ended with his face getting punched, in the art shop. I can't remember anything else pertinent or noteworthy about this one, I just guess that if you were to ever ask me if I have ever met a bloody faced art store owner, I can say yup.







Guy from out of town turned the wrong way into a coffee stand drive-through, so he backed up and then pulled forward into a parking spot, completely neglecting to set his parking brake on a hill. While he was inside ordering coffee, his car rolled backward and toward the busy road. Gaining speed going downhill, the car crossed the road with drivers going both ways managing to avoid hitting it. The car wound up about 40 feet off the roadway down in the woods. But nobody got hurt.






2:30 am; some poor lady's home alarm is in full blown alarm mode, but with no burglar present. She can't get the alarm siren to turn off and it causes her to go into full freakout panic attack mode, and I have to show up and calm her down. It helped a bit that I knew her; she was a retired school teacher.





About a month after a local officer-involved shooting that left a citizen dead and a community on edge, I was at a gas station filling up my patrol car. I guy I casually knew was there and he thought it would be funny to walk up behind me and say "Hey officer get your hands up!" Turns out, that was actually not so funny. Not. At. All.





I pulled over a driver for turning in front of another car without using his turn signal. "Do you know why I stopped you, sir?" I asked him. He said "Because I didn't have my seatbelt on. And I was talking on my cell phone. And I didn't stop at the stop sign."





Guy suicided himself in a local motel. Used cyanide. Bought it online. It worked. The really crazy part is that he had it planned out for two years; he wanted to leave behind a life insurance payout for his teenage son. The guy wasn't dying of cancer or anything, he just wanted to die. So he bought a life insurance policy that covered suicide, waited the two years for that part of the policy to kick in, and then he killed himself. Sometimes I still wonder how his son felt about all of that.






Many times over the years I dealt with citizens who came to the police front counter and wanted to turn in unwanted guns, or ammunition, or both. Sometime the ammunition would be 50 years old, or there would be a full 5 gallon bucket of shotgun shells, or somebody would want us to destroy essentially new and perfectly good assault rifles or handguns.





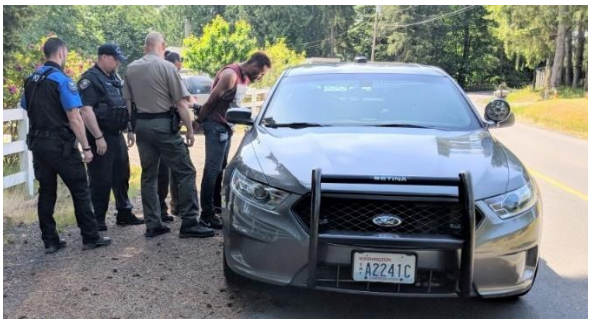
On rare occasions, somebody would come back for a gun that we had in safekeeping. One time I signed back over to some guy a large heavy revolver that appeared to have some blood and hair on the business end of it. I didn't know the history of the gun until the guy explained his son had used it to kill himself a few months' earlier. And for some reason he wanted the gun back.








Had a rock once get thrown up by a car on the highway and the rock hit my windshield at about Mach .8, impacting directly in front of my face and causing a very large chip and crack. Took me about 1/50th of a second to have a complete heart attack before realizing it had been just a rock.





A house was on fire. One of my coworkers – a super smart guy but completely lacking in common sense (so…kind of an idiot..) got there first before the fire department. He wanted to go in and check the house for victims, but couldn't because of the smoke. It was fine though; nobody had been in there. My idiot coworker later petitioned the police chief and the fire chief for permission to get issued a self-contained breathing apparatus, to carry in his trunk, in case he needed to run into another house on fire and save somebody and be a hero. Both chiefs told him, for a variety of reasons, "Absolutely Not."






A woman with some kind of a medical condition had fainted/lost consciousness while outside her house. A small crowd gathered while she was on the ground. I arrived with the EMT's. A passerby asked one of the medics "What happened?" and he quickly answered with a terse 'Skydiving accident." Which made the inquiring citizen look up into the sky, bewildered. Me, being new to the job, was slightly shocked to hear a public safety professional so brazenly make up a lie like that. I guess he'd gotten tired over the years of people asking what happened. I was shocked, but also highly, highly amused. Still am.





There I was in court, waiting for a trial to start. The prosecutor has gone to a lot of effort to make sure the case was good to be presented, and now all the officers and witnesses and victims involved are gathered, and the jury is going to be selected. The defense attorney, now seeing that the case is looking grim for his client, acquiesces and accepts a last-minute plea deal so his client won't be tried in court, knowing that it would be futile. Was I irritated with this all-too-common defense attorney tactic, of literally waiting to see if all the accusers and officers actually show up? Yes, yes I was. How many times did that happen to me during my career? Too many to count. It's like having to prep for a big exam that gets cancelled; good outcome, but stressful.





House fire. Firefighters go in and carry out the two small dogs that had been trapped in there. They administer oxygen and do CPR; one dog was saved, the other was a goner. The owner of the dogs and house showed up and was convinced the fire was an arson set by her neighbor: She was hysterical and I literally had to hold her back from charging at him.







Car v. pedestrian fatality: pedestrian was at fault for darting out in front of a moving car in the dark. As a matter of routine my report went to the prosecutor's office for review. The prosecutors read the report and decided the driver was not criminally liable and they decided no charges were warranted. I felt bad for the driver because it took the prosecutors 509 days to close the case and write the one-paragraph "Decline to Prosecute" notice and send it to the driver. My copy showed up after (only) 648 days.

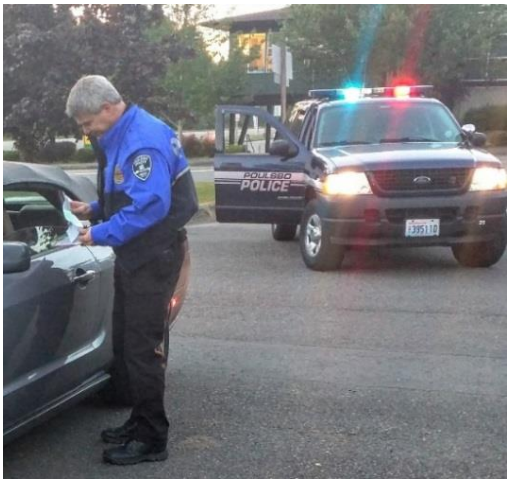


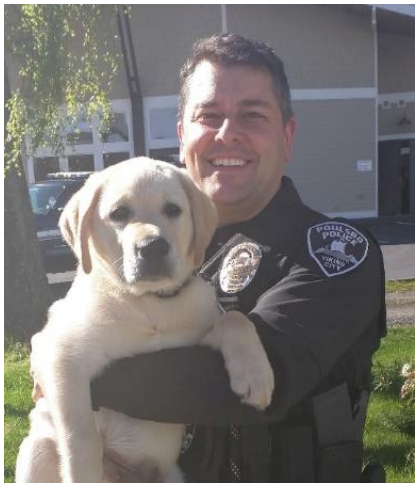




I've gotten really cynical about a lot of things. When I hear that somebody has killed himself, I don't automatically assume it's a complete tragedy. Because what if the dead guy had been a child molester? Or a rapist? What if he knew he couldn't control his compulsions, and in an effort to save more victims from his predatory behavior he decided it would just be best for him to personally remove himself from society, permanently? You can't tell me that doesn't ever happen. So yeah..I'm suspicious and cynical about a LOT of things.

Driving a prisoner to jail, I hear him in the back seat ask me - in all seriousness - “Hey Officer, can we stop and get some cigarettes?”







A homeowner was mad that kids were driving over his lawn after school; using his property as a shortcut. I suggested digging a trench to slow them down. He planted trees instead. I think about that when I drive by his house – after 25 years the lawn is long gone and the trees are impressively large and tall now.







I got called one night out to an apartment for something and had the hardest time trying to find the exact unit, which had “9” in it. I think the number was “39”. But a screw had come loose on the 9 and it got flipped upside down to become a 6. And it didn’t help that all the unit numbers were displayed in a staggered format. When I eventually realized the 6 was supposed to be a 9, I had a little chat about that with resident there.







The volkswagen sedan that got rear ended in an accident on the highway and burst into flames within seconds. Literally. Burst into flames. Within seconds. Fortunately everybody got out in time. Also fortunate: cars exploding like that are very rare.



A prisoner in the jail had some information about a crime that I needed solved, so I went to the jail to talk to him. The corrections officers put me in a secure interview room, and they went off to find the guy. They bring him into the room. He looks at me and immediately invokes his right against self incrimination by stating "I want an attorney." Which meant the interview was completely over at that second, so I waved him off and the staff turned around and took him back to his cell. That guy didn't even want to ask which case I was investigating; he just knew that it could not possibly benefit him to talk to me.





I pulled over an old guy once for some kind of a minor traffic violation; I can't remember what but I do remember chastising the man because it took a long time (and distance) for him to notice me following behind him, with all my emergency lights flashing. His curt reponse: "I look in front when I'm driving not behind me."






I was at a car crash scene on the highway, directing traffic around some smashed cars. The motorists that are being directed around are very close to me; just a couple feet but they're going slow so it's okay. One old guy gets near me and I see he's not wearing his seat belt, which triggers me hard so I stop him. Because the one thing really, really amazes me is when people SEE CRASHED CARS in the road and STILL DON'T BUCKLE UP. So I yell at the guy to put on his seat belt. He nods at me, and keeps driving. Making no move to put it on. I notice he's not just any guy; he's a fellow city employee, who works in the Planning and Engineering Department. I yell at him again to no, really, put it on. He nods and smiles again and to appease me, reaches over, and pulls his seatbelt across his lap. But does not make an effort to actually click it in, because he obviously was going to just let go the second he got past me. Which he then did.





Some officer's young son got ahold of dad's police radio, left unattended at home. The dispatcher had just sent some officers out to some kind of a domestic disturbance on Sesame Street Lane in Port Orchard. Next to Bird Big Drive, you know. The kid, who sounded like he around 5 years old, starting talking on the police frequency in a cookie monster voice, which was 5% irritating and 95% percent funny as hell. Of course it was a major breach of radio protocol for a kid to be horsing around on the police radio. I tried asking him a couple of times "Who's your daddy?" but he didn't want to answer that one. Now that I think about it, me saying "Who's your daddy?" on the police radio was probably a world's first.





Another time somebody else got ahold of a police radio- I suspect it was a guy who was just driving through town. He was not cute though, because he was taunting us and noting when he drove past him. Of course we didn't know which officers were passing him when or where, and we had no idea what he was driving. That only lasted a few minutes but it was super weird.





I stopped a woman for speeding. She was crying, and looked distraught. Her excuse shocked me: "I just put my husband in a nursing home." She looked maybe 45 years old. Did I give her a ticket? God no!





I caught two idiots cashing stolen and forged checks at a bank. She was 25, he was 38. Both unemployed, homeless, and living in her car that was about to be repossessed. I interrogated them, broke them down pretty quickly and they confessed. When I asked them what they had been spending their money on, they said "gasoline, food, and uh, the casino." The other two officers present were quickly disgusted. I said "Hey c'mon, they were trying to double their money!" The 38 year drug addict thief quietly agreed with me: "It's true officer…I WAS trying double the money."





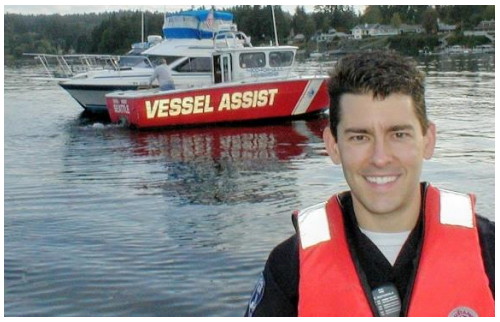
High school assistant principal called me one day while I was working swing shift – 3 pm to 11 pm – and he reported he had expelled a student earlier in the day, and now that he had thought about it a bit, was thinking maybe the police should be informed that the reason the kid was kicked out of school was because he had made some threats to bring a gun to school and shoot other students. Assistant principal admitted he probably should maybe have called the police while he had the kid still in his office. I agreed that would have been great. Before I went and tracked the kid down at his house, I admonished the assistant high school principal a bit.



What NOT to say when you get pulled over by the police for speeding: "Aren't there bank robbers you need to be catching?"

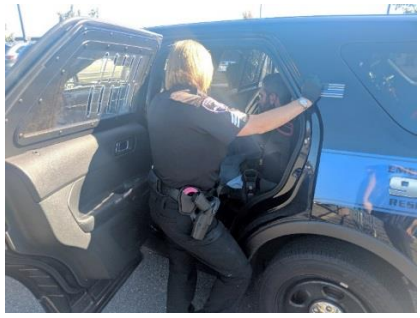






A guy out walking his dog found several watches in the bushes. You know, as one does. He called 911, I showed up and looked around, and found about a dozen more. Obviously stolen and dumped. Not expensive watches, most of them were of the WalMart variety; used, from somebody's personal collection. No idea where they had come from.







One day I had to search a house for a bad guy. He had decided to try to hide under a mattress that was on a floor. He was a big guy, too; well over 6 feet and 240 pounds. He did not have the build to hide under a mattress. It was actually kind of hilarious.



An employee at Walmart got caught embezzling. He was fired, and charges were filed against him. What makes this particular case noteworthy is that his adult daughter had been arrested for pretty much the same thing about a year earlier, when she had also been an employee at Walmart.





Y'all know what a "water hammer" is? It's a hydraulic shock that can happen when fluid in motion – like water in pipes – is brought to a quick stop, which can create a back pressure surge/shock wave and sometimes a hammering noise. If, say, there's a house fire and the fire department taps into a fire hydrant and when the fire is over maybe a rookie firefighter shuts the hydrant off too abruptly, the pressure surge can go backward a couple blocks and completely blow out really old public utility pipes underground. Which is where I come in; to shut down the street because a chasm has erupted open in the middle of the road and water is pouring out, along with large amounts of dirt and mud and rocks and gravel, making a real mess of the road.







I pulled over a guy because the registration stickers on his car were expired by almost a year a half. He explained the car was owned by his ex-wife, and she was refusing to transfer the title or pay for new tabs. Poor bastard, it reminded me of the gal I pulled over once who had expired tabs; her excuse was that her ex husband had driven the car past toll cameras several dozen times and never paid for them; the fines and fees making it impossible for her to renew her registration.





There once was a cop in a nearby agency who left the force to pursue a career as a lawyer. Which is actually not uncommon. But he wound up specializing in, of all things, filing lawsuits against cops. He had two sons; one was a war hero and the other was a complete loser. At age 20, the loser son had been arrested for hosting an under-age drinking party in his apartment. Dad sued the officers involved– my coworkers - for violating his son's rights; saying they had no authority to go into his apartment. The city settled the case out of court for a $10,000 check, and loser son learned (again) that dad would help him out of any trouble. Fast forward 20 years; the lawyer suffered a series of debilitating strokes and had to retire. His assistant confided to me one day that the lawyer was expressing great regret that he spent so much time and effort bailing out and defending his youngest son, who never amounted to anything. I was glad to hear that the enabling dad was sorry about that. Because he absolutely should have been sorry– he did that kid no favors.

Me, at a traffic stop: “Sir, your rear license plate is severely faded and worn out. You have to get a new one.” Very Indignant Driver: “And I suppose I have to pay for that myself?!?”







Twice in one day I got dispatched to respond with aid crews to distraught, possibly suicidal old people. (The fire department protocol is to get the police involved if there is the slightest chance of danger.) Both times, my presence at the scene did nothing to calm down our clients. “Oh this is just great now the police are here whattya gonna do arrest me for being a nutcase?!?





We had a guy in town who was homeless; an old army vet. He walked around a lot and it was clear he had been a professional marcher; walking around with a backpack on was definitely his specialty. He was quiet and never bothered anybody, and even took regular showers at the parks and rec building. So we – the officers – didn’t care that he made a little homestead in the woods. One day he stopped showing up in public. Because he had died in his little hut he had made. It was quite an impressive campsite: kept very clean and orderly, even the ground had been swept. His hut was a pretty solid construction, made with 2x4 studs and plywood, and he had even painted it all a nice dark forest green to blend in. How often did the police mess with him in any way? None. None times. Because he kept to himself and never bothered anybody at all. We were actually kind of bummed when he died. He was only like 60-something years old.




Me, talking to an old Vietnam war vet who had PTSD. He explained that sometimes he’d be walking down the street and catch a glimpse of himself in storefront mirrors and literally not recognize himself as an old man; frequently he was stuck in 1970 when he was 19 years old. He also had a tamed wolf that I enjoyed meeting. The wolf was calm and quite overweight, which I suppose was a good thing - one probably wouldn’t want a hungry wolf in one’s house. He said the wolf was pretty chill, except when it saw a coyote out in the yard. Or when it noticed that the moon was full.

Young lady, 22 years old. Living alone in her new apartment. She was having her first ever major scary psychotic break. She had come back from a tent revival and the energy there had set her off and now a couple hours later I was at her open front door; she was just inside the doorstep, brandishing a large butcher knife, in full-on schizophrenic mode. She held the pointy knife in front of her and looked at me with wild eyes. "Take it," she told me. I can see she's sweaty and trembling. Yipes! I thought. This seems like a scene I've seen in movie or two. But I was sensing she was more distressed than aggressive, so I was able to reach out and gently take the knife out of her hand, and toss it into the bushes behind me. As she was getting strapped down onto a gurney and loaded into an aid car, her mother showed up and said that daughter had lately been exhibiting mild signs of schizophrenia, and now apparently it was suddenly official.





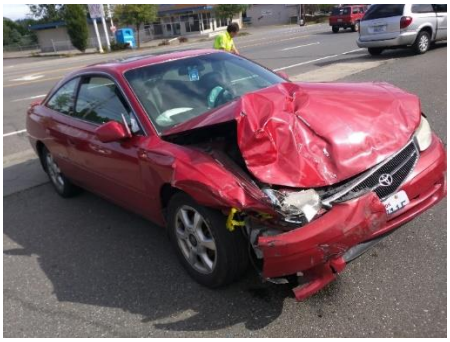
I drove into the curb too hard, and broke a wheel. Because I had been responding at full speed to a guy running out of Walmart with stolen loot. The guy jumped in his car and sped out of the parking lot. He passed me and I turned on him, but I misjudged time and space; my patrol car's right front wheel slammed into the curb hard and broke, although I didn't realize how badly at that moment. I straightened out and pulled the guy over a block away. Took him in to custody, got a full confession and another officer took him to jail. I got back in my car and turned the steering wheel and the right front wheel at that moment decided to become just about completely detached from my patrol car. Good thing the suspect had pulled over straight down the road and didn't turn at the intersection; I would have lost it the second I made a turn, especially at speed. So yeah, I broke my car. A tow truck took it away and we got it fixed. The good news though is that the guy went off to prison after jail, because he got convicted.







Autistic 13 year old kid was having a freak out episode at his house, bad enough for his mother to call 911. I arrived on the scene and saw the kid punching his mother in the driveway; she was taking the blows calmly. Clearly she was used to this sort of thing. I intervened and the kid turned his attention to me, not appreciating the fact that trying to attack a police officer is a generally frowned-upon action. Fortunately he had no technique at all and I was able to control him enough for an aid car to take him away for a mental health evaluation. Mother and I both agreed that since he was a large kid – close to 200 pounds and taller than both of us – it was pretty important to get his meds dialed in right. And make sure he doesn't learn anything about fighting.







Burglary at a tow truck impound yard: the idiot suspect somehow managed to leave behind some pretty good ID: her credit card. The name on the card matched the impounded vehicle that had been broken into….so…that was a pretty easy case to solve.







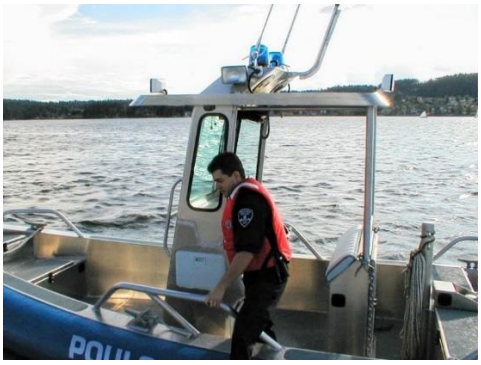
Suspicious guy in a park, being just weird enough for somebody to call 911 and let the police know he's there. Turns out to be the same weird guy I had been looking for earlier, after another 911 call had been made. I walk up him and ask him for ID. He sighed and said "I don't want to tell you." I looked at him and said "Look you can either tell me right now, or we can wait and you can tell the other 3 officers who are going to be here when I call them." I got my radio out and started to ask for backup. He sighed again. "Alight, I'll tell you my name.." I ran his name and was advised he had a huge warrant out for his arrest. "I'm going to prison for a few years," he told me. "I knew this day was coming." He told me that he had been a successful tattoo artist, making over $80,000 a year but he had got addicted to meth. Specifically, he said he had been on the "meth diet plan" which caused him to lose around 180 pounds in about a year. Of course being a pretty good tattoo artist is a valuable skill set in prison; he'd be pretty popular (in good way) and have something to do while locked up.







As our police department evolved, we added to our roster a mental health behavioral specialist that went by the title of "navigator" since she helped some of our crazier clients navigate the local mental health resources to get them the help they needed. Among her many tips and techniques, she knew better than to ever tell anybody (especially somebody freaking out in full-on crisis mode) to "calm down." Her go to line was instead "Okay I need you to focus.."







There I am running code, which meant I was driving really fast, red and blue lights flashing and strobing and my siren is on and I have to catch up to the idiot driver who just passed me driving like a freak and as I get behind him he suddenly notices the police car in his rearview mirror so he stomps on his brakes and pulls over so stupid fast that I have to stomp on my brakes harder, and all the gear and equipment I have on the passenger seat gets dumped onto the floor. Swear words ensue. Did the violator get a ticket? Oh yes. If you make me slam on my brakes so hard that everything spills into a mess and my files and lunch get poured out all over the floor..yeah…there will most definitely be a ticket issued.





A teen girl reported to me that she had been raped. The sex with her boyfriend had started out consensual but after it started she said she wanted to stop so her boyfriend stopped and they talked it out and he talked her back into it and they resumed but then after awhile she said no again so he stopped again and after bit more talking they started again and then she told him to stop again but he didn't want to stop again so he just kept going. What makes this case extra-notable is that this happened on Halloween. Outside, in a cemetery. On a grave. At around midnight. The girl had been a little freaked out about this beforehand so she had brought along her girlfriend to hold her hand. Yes, during the sexy time part.





I was at one of the assisted-living nursing home care facilities, to interview somebody for something crime related I can't remember what, when I ran into a local resident I knew casually; we exchanged pleasantries and he explained he was there visiting to play the piano for the old folks, cause that's what he did once a week. Which was a bit intriguing, since he was rather severely developmentally disabled. As in unemployed and unemployable; illiterate, no drivers license, etc. and if anybody looked at him from 50 feet away you'd be able to clearly see that he was not right in the head, if you know what I mean. But he was a nice guy; always smiling. So I watched him "play the piano" for an audience of old people who had gathered around to listen. One of the nurses there told me afterward that this guy was self-taught; no formal lessons and he couldn't read sheet music, so it was all in his head. His performance….was….jaw-droppingly amazing. I had known the guy for 20 plus years and had no idea he was in fact an actual savant, specializing in piano music. He played original classical/baroque compositions and I was absolutely stunned. My mind was blown. Still is. That guy could play the piano like a boss! There's a lesson here about looking at book covers and not judging the contents.



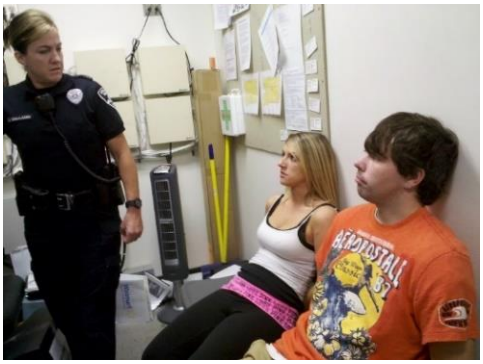



I walked into Home Depot one day while on duty and the cashiers said to me "Oh! You should have been here 15 minutes ago, some guy just pushed out a cart with about $700 dollar's worth of power tools!" I asked them "And you didn't call 911?!?" The cashiers looked at me and said "Nah, we don't care that much. We're not allowed to grab onto them or the cart, and we can't really follow them out into the parking lot, so once they get past the front door we just let them go."

I found a fugitive in the woods near a car wash; I took him into custody and he got booked into the jail. But he couldn't take the beer he had with him; about a dozen bottles in a large shopping bag. I suggested we stash it in the woods nearby and maybe when he got of jail he could get it back. He agreed. A week or two later I was at the car wash getting my patrol cleaned and I made the car wash attendant's day when my conversation with him started out as "Hey? Do you like beer?"







When I first started my career, the officers' work schedule was filled out by hand on a large written dry erase white board on the squad room wall. So back in those days, when an officer wanted to take a day off or come in to work maybe a few hours later than scheduled, he'd have to call an on-duty officer and ask them to go to the office and look at the board and see what the work schedule looked like. And because this was before cell phones were invented, the only option was to call the phone at the office and hope somebody was actually there at that moment to pick it up.





I never wrote tickets to delivery drivers. Only one time did I give a ticket to a kid delivering pizzas; he really, really deserved it. I had a coworker once issue a notice of infraction to a UPS driver who was going a little too fast. The poor UPS guy came to the PPD immediately afterward and wanted to file an appeal with the Chief, who of course told him to just go to court and resolve it that way. Grant, the idiot officer who wrote the ticket was his usual dumb proud self. "He's a professional driver, he should know better than to speed," he told me. "Yeah but the UPS guy? The guy who delivers boxes and presents to your door? Really? You couldn't just scare him with a warning?!?"







Sometimes I'd slip a bizarre ethnic food into our refrigerator at work - like canned clam juice, a pack of dried seaweed, or a plastic wrapped tray of chicken feet. And write a name on it that wasn't mine. Eventually people would get mad that Dave's crazy food was sitting there uneaten taking up space in the fridge and they'd go yell at him to eat his food already and Dave would wonder why people were yelling at him to eat his seaweed. Bonus points to label food with a name that more than one employee had so both Daves, or both Dans, or both Jasons would be confronted and both would be equally confused.







Me, at the jail, booking a client in for some kind of transgression against society. I'm at the intake counter filling out the paperwork and in front of me were some monitors showing the temporary holding crisis rooms; literal rubber rooms with padded walls and flooring. Crisis Cell 3 had a man on the floor, curled in the ball, twitching. The jailers told me that he was coming down off of meth and was having serious withdrawal symptoms. Crisis Cell 2 had a woman who was yelling non-stop that she wanted to go home. The staff told me that she had actually finished serving her sentence and was scheduled to be released, but every time they took her out to finish the processing she'd fight them, so they kept putting her back in there. And Crisis Cell 1 had a naked man who was moving around very slowly, staring at everything but mostly just the drain in the floor. He got down on the floor and put his face about an inch from the drain and just stared it. Since there was no toilet in there, I can't imagine the drain smelled good at all. Oh I should also mention this guy had smeared shit all over the walls with his hands. I spent a long time staring at those folks. I was just transfixed. I thought the cameras aimed in there should be routed to the local cable network so people at home could watch them, too. Maybe make a special educational TV channel called "We Told You Drugs Will Mess You Up" and just run the cameras 24 hours a day on a special jail cam channel.






As a crime prevention officer, I was expected to fingerprint a lot of little kids for "safety programs" at fairs and festivals. It was so stupid. A few companies had figured out how to make money by selling little booklets to police departments or fraternal and civic organizations so parents could get a Polaroid picture of their little darling child and have their fingers inked and printed into the booklet. Do you know how hard it is to fingerprint little squirmy kids? It's really hard. Really messy. And then one day while I was trying to wrangle some sticky kid's little fingers onto the paper to make some good fingerprints I realized how stupid the whole idea was. I started asking parents "Why exactly do you want your kids fingerprinted here?" and they'd say something vague and lame like "For safety," and then sometimes if I was in a bad mood because their kid was extra messy I'd really start to question them. "How does having their fingerprints make them safer?" And the general response would be like "Well, if they get lost…then we'd have the fingerprints…and so…yeah." Which would lead to me say something like "Listen, if your kid gets lost and then found, they'd still know their name, right? Couldn't they just tell whoever found them what their name is? Or are you thinking they're dead, and they can't talk. Then those fingerprints will come in handy, I guess. If the head is gone and you can't tell who the body is. But if the head is gone, like rotted away or something, it's a fair guess that the tips of the fingers are going to be decomposed, too. Hey? You know what? If the police find a kid and nobody can tell if it's yours or not, they're going to do a DNA test to figure it out! Fingerprints are going to be useless! You want to keep your kids safe, tell them not talk to strangers on the internet and don't bother with this stupid fingerprinting nonsense!" Okay, I didn't really get that graphic with folks, that was mostly all in my head. But I'll bet that of all the tens of thousands or hundreds of thousands of little kids fingerprinted across the country, not a single case missing kid case was ever solved because some parent had their fingerprints on file to prove an identity.





As a professional crime fighter, I frequently had to drive fast and jump out of my patrol car quickly. It's a skill and habit that carried over to my personal life, in my own personal cars. Not the driving fast part, but the part where I park my car and get out quickly. I was usually out of the car and waiting impatiently before my wife or kids even had their seatbelts off.



Seen on the window in the police department lobby, a handwritten sign that read: "POST NO SIGNS HERE THAT OBSTRUCT THE WINDOW". Was it a joke? Was it serious? Turned out to be a joke, especially when several more variations of "POST NO MORE SIGNS THAT OBSTRUCT THE WINDOW" by other officers wound up completely covering the whole window. I'll take credit for a sign that I taped over the chief's door, about 8 feet off the floor: "ATTENTION: NO SIGNS SHALL BE POSTED THIS HIGH UP" – that one actually lasted a few weeks there and was seen by more than one other visiting police chief from other departments. And somebody posted in the chief's office a sign that read "THIS OFFICE WILL TOLERATE NO REDUNDANCY IN THIS OFFICE". That one also stayed there for a few weeks.







When I was the K9 handler, I'd sometimes throw the dog's ball into the police chief's office like a hand grenade. The dog would of course go barreling into the office to get the ball and if he crashed or bounced off a wall or desk that would be even better. I was usually rewarded with the chief getting caught off guard and he'd yell out some combination of surprise and/or irritation.







The first police station I worked in had a holding cell. The walls became covered with shoe prints (from people kicking) and graffiti scrawlings from bored prisoners. Sometimes we'd give them pen and paper to write confessions and sometimes they'd write on the walls instead. Or they'd use little bits of gravel from their shoe treads to carve initials in the walls, or use other hard things. You'd be surprised what bored prisoners can come up with to write on walls, and that was not unique to our holding cell – every jail cell I've ever seen in person at the "real" jail and at the juvenile jail all had walls completely decorated with all kinds of carved and scratched sentiments, from initials and dates to names of loved ones, names of hated officers, gang signs, swear words, and my favorite; names of people labeled as snitches. Our holding cell was eventually painted dark brown to cover it up and make the mood in there a little calmer, but eventually the walls were all vandalized again with scribbling and scrawling. I never knew what to make out about the "I Love Officer Hoke" I once found carved into the wall there. That was a little.. different.







One day when I was in the chief's office talking to him about something I was glancing at his bookshelf which had a variety of things displayed; some family photos, a collection of challenge coins, a yellow painted brick from the FBI leadership class he somehow graduated from, and things like that. And I came up with an amusing thought: If I sneak into the chief's office and slip some other random memento onto his shelf when he was away, how long would it take for him to notice it? Specifically, the whole idea was based on the amusing premise that he'd be sitting at his desk, maybe having a meeting with some state representative or senator or sheriff and he'd look over at his shelf and suddenly notice some new really stupid, really goofy looking thing among all his professional memorabilia. Hopefully, something ridiculous that his visitor would notice first? And so from that thought was born an operation that I carried out for well over a year. My source for artifacts (yes, plural) was the large Goodwill thrift store in Silverdale. Like just about every thrift store, there was a section where knick knacks were for sale; stupid little shelf decorations, a good percentage of which probably came from some dead grandmas house where the family had to clean all the junk out and send boxes of crap to the Goodwill and there was always a pretty good supply of dozens of really, stupid things to choose from; I usually picked out a weird animal figurine or some kind of little porcelain figurine that was crudely painted. If I could put a real head scratcher thing in there, I did. I planted probably close to a dozen in there. Like a little figurine of a cat licking its paw next to a large psychedelic mushroom. The chief actually kept a few of them; he was obliging with the humor. But he did get rid of the large porcelain hand that had a naked cherub hugging it. Eventually I settled on a very specific theme of getting him figurines of animals or people bent over. Like a playful puppy with its tail in the air. Gets a LOT funnier when displayed backwards. He got a lot of those; like the little girl ballerina leaning over with her skirt up in the air. Got a LOT funnier when posed on his shelf backward. Sometimes when he noticed something new he'd snap a photo of it and send it to my phone, and I'd always text back "You're just noticing that NOW? It's been there for over a month!" which was sometimes true, sometimes not. Also one time I added into his office a very large picture frame of a schematic drawing, of a crane barge. Like a giant blueprint. Somebody had been very proud of it so they had it framed; I suppose it was originally in some engineer's office or something. When I saw it at Goodwill one day and the price was only $10 bucks, I snatched it up. It had a nice frame and was covered in glass; nice high quality. Oh it was 4 feet high and 4 feet wide. It barely fit in my car. Chief had no idea what to do with it because it was so stupid large and looked kind of valuable, so he couldn't just throw it away. That thing was in his office for a few months; I'm sure he shook his head more than a few times at it.





The very first drunk driver I had ever caught had, in his car with him already…his lawyer. When I told the drunk driver to get out of his car, his lawyer/girlfriend told him that he didn't have to. I insisted to him that he had to. She insisted he had the right NOT to. That poor guy was in a tough spot then, but as he told me later, he could see the look on my face was pretty serious so he decided he'd better listen to me. I arrested him for DUI, and for better or worse his girlfriend (who was indeed a criminal defense attorney) was with us for the entire process. Did I mention this was my first-ever drunk driving arrest, which in and of itself would have been pretty nerve racking but mine was ten times worse because his stupid lawyer was there watching everything and butting in. By the way, her advice to him that he did not have to get out of his car when ordered to do so by the police – uh, yeah that was terrible legal advice. Good thing he listened to me instead. Fast forward 15 years: that lawyer woman actually got elected as a county Superior Court Judge, go figure.





Also back from when I was a rookie officer: I was paired with my mentor and field training officer in the first couple months of my career when we came across two girls out walking late at night. They were about 14 years old, and they accepted our offer for a ride back home. We dropped them off and we were feeling pretty good about that when my partner decided to call one of their parents and just check in. The first parent he called said his daughter was at her friends' house for a sleepover..but the address he gave was not the one we delivered the girls to. The second parent – also at a different house - said both girls were asleep upstairs. We asked him to double check that. He did, and a minute later told us that they were not there! My partner and I then fully realized that we had just aided and abetted two runaway girls to escape to some other place. We gave the address to the parents and jumped in our car to beat them there. Good news: we found the two girls in the backyard, in a tent with their two boyfriends – brothers – who lived in the house. A minute later both of the girls' parents arrived to take their girls back, but not before the father of the two brothers showed up. I remember explaining the whole thing to him and he could not quite hide his admiring smile he had for his two sons; I could tell he was a little proud of them for getting two young ladies over to their place. Helped by the police, even. He was really the only one smiling; the other parents were kind of pissed.





"Somebody stole my car!" the old lady cried to the 911 dispatcher. "We'll send an officer out to you, ma'am," the dispatcher assured her, and I get the call. I go the Walmart to meet her. "I had my car parked right in front of the store with my dog in there and now my car is gone and stolen!" Her panic level is pretty high; mine not so much because this has happened before many times; usually it's just the dog got tired of waiting and drove home. I take her remote control and go head for a different part of the parking lot, and I click the alarm button on it repeatedly until I'm rewarded with a horn honking, of course not anywhere near where grandma thought she had parked her car. I go pick up grandma and show her where she had left (and forgotten) her car and dog. She was equal parts embarrassed and relieved. How many times have I responded to calls of stolen cars that were actually just misplaced on a different street or different part of a parking lot? A lot. And yes, always old people.





Speaking of the Walmart parking lot, there I am talking to an old guy in his motorhome; he's gone into homseteading mode there but the manager has noticed that he's taken to peeing off his doorstep into the parking lot instead of using his toilet. And the old guy was peeing a lot, since he was also an alcoholic. I knocked on the motorhome door and talked to the old guy at length; he was quite personable. He had graduated from the naval academy in 1950-something with a degree in physics, and had a long distinguished career, retiring as a Captain. But alcohol had taken over his life; his wife had kicked him out of the house and all of his adult kids couldn't stand him anymore, so he was alone in his shitty motorhome, with soiled clothes and bad breath and complete denial that alcohol had ruined his life.





I caught a teenage boy throwing eggs one night; he was out driving around, and throwing them at street signs, cars, houses, mailboxes; pretty much anything and everything. He had found a store that sold eggs by the gross, which is 12 packs of 12. I only had a couple victims identified, so the local newspaper ran an article, asking if anybody else had damage to their cars from that little rascal. I had only like one person call to report damage; leaving about 140 other eggs unaccounted for. I guess that kid had really bad aim. And by the way, store clerks should not be selling 144 eggs to any teenagers. Especially at night.





I caught a prolific car prowler. Not a local; he was from Tacoma. He freely admitted he was guilty, and in a very long interview he described how he would go out every night and get into literally dozens of cars that were unlocked, in cities and towns all over Western Washington. He was a regular one-man crime wave, but had decided to reform and stop doing that.







5:30 am: a condo resident called 911 to complain that his upstairs neighbor was making too much noise again. I called him back and he insisted to me that I go talk to the noisemaker. “When you show up and talk to her,” he told me, “I’ll come along and watch.” Me: “Uh, okay, so you’re going to talk to her too then and you guys can work this out yourselves?” Complainant: “No I won’t say anything, I’ll just stand there and be quiet and watch you talk to her.”

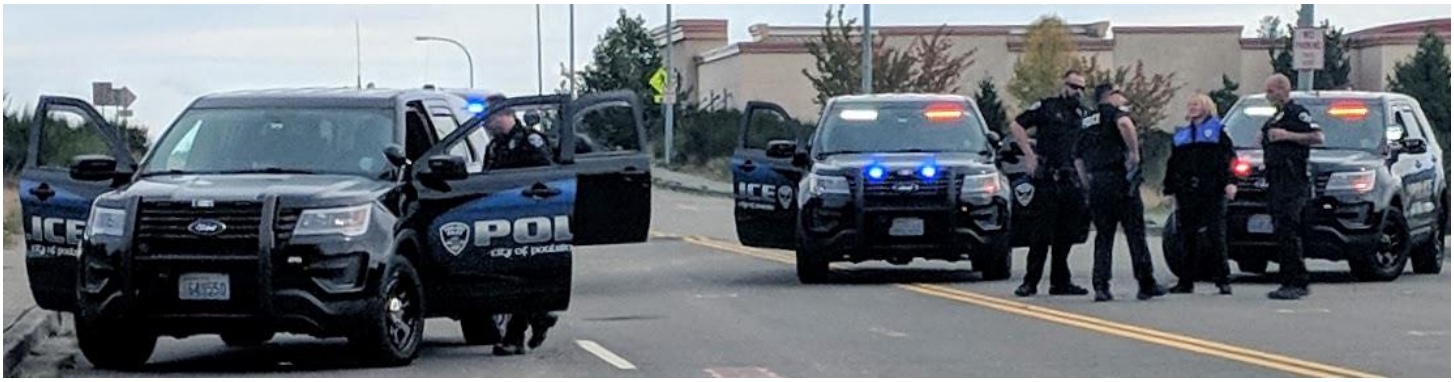






Gal came into court to quash a warrant. (No, not “squash” – the real legal term is “quash”..) She was hoping to get released by the judge but no such luck; the judge ordered her taken into custody and booked into the jail. A search of her purse turned up her heroin kit, complete with a bent and burnt spoon, syringes, and heroin. She really should not have brought all that with her. That was just.. not smart.

Traffic stop: I pulled over a lady for speeding. Like the vast majority of my clients, no ticket was issued, just a warning to not do it again. I turned to go back to my patrol car and the driver was so relieved she blurted out her thanks to me as: "I love you!"



One day I was out on foot patrol and came across a teenager in the woods near the school. He saw me and immediately started running, so I gave chase. I caught him after he climbed over a chain link fence, realizing too late that the fence had been designed – intentionally – to have poking cut ends along the top. The kid got some bloody puncture wounds in his hands. Turns out he had no real reason to run; he had no drugs or contraband, no warrants, he wasn't a runaway or truant, he literally just didn't want to talk to me that day. He explained his older brother had just died and he was feeling sad and anti-social about everything. We both agreed that running from me didn't turn out so well for him. I actually felt bad for that kid.





I was working traffic out on highway 3 northbound and I caught a guy speeding. As I was talking to him he asked for directions; he had just started a vacation and was going cross country. He was in the merchant marines and wanted some road time, so he had rented a car and was off to Florida; but now about 30 minutes into his journey he was lost. "I take it you don't work in the navigation department?" I asked him. "No, I work down the engine room." "Well sir, you are heading toward Canada right now…which is pretty much the compete opposite direction of your destination." I gave some easy to understand directions to head southeast, so he could get to Florida without going through Canada first.

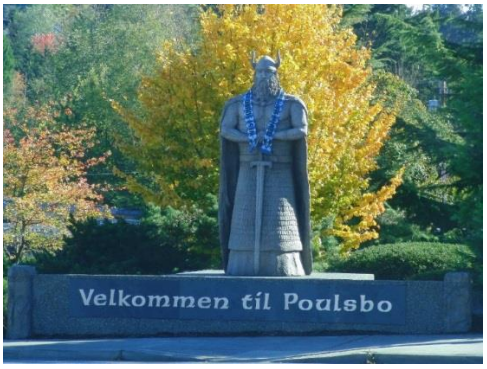




Another lost guy, with his wife: both were from France and visiting the United States. He had a small map and he showed it to me so I could clue him in. The map was so small that the state of Washington was smaller than my hand, missing most of the major roads he'd need to know about. This was before cell phones had maps on them so I suggested to him that should go buy a local road map that would show much more detail.







I was driving down a hilly back country road and as I came over a hillcrest I saw a car coming toward me, and out the passenger window goes flying a full trash bag. I stopped the driver and recovered the bag; it had about a dozen cool-whip cans, mostly empty. The driver explained he had let his teenage kids use the car, and clearly they had been snorting the nitrous from the cans for a cheap high, and he was pissed about all the cans left over in his car so in a brief rage he threw it out the window, unfortunately for him right when I was watching him. His occupation: "Flight Director, SeaTac Airport." When I asked him how often he littered like that, he said "Almost never."





Office prank time: The classic one for me was to rig an officer's personnel mailbox with a contraption that would spill out paper hole punches when extracted from the mail slot. Sometimes the officers would see one of my suspiciously-folded paper folders or small boxes and not fall for it; other times they'd pull it out, and the box or folder with no bottom would spill out a large quantity of punched-out holes all over the counter, the floor, and their feet. My favorite one was when one of the detectives fell for it and yelled out "FUCKING NICK!" even before the falling hole punches hit the floor.





Another good one was the time I got a very small electronic audio bug/noisemaker and hid it in one of the officer's brand new cars. It made random chirping noises, between long intervals of silence. It was discovered pretty quickly though. Then that officer hid it in a sergeant's cubicle. Sergeant was not amused at all. In fact he issued a scathing memorandum, ordering that no noisemaking audio devices were to ever be hidden in the office ever again. He really lost his shit over that one. The whole "no more ever" decree was a pretty extreme -and disappointing - overreaction.

A woman caused a car crash by running a red light in an intersection; cross traffic had to slam on brakes to avoid hitting her, causing a rear-ender accident. Woman at fault kept going but her plate was recorded by a witness and I found her and cited her for reckless driving. She was 60-something years old with a clean driving record, so the charge would not have been too harsh for her record or insurance rates. But she decided she wanted to fight the charge, so she got her day in court and her attorney had to try and explain that although yes, the woman had driving through the red light and caused an accident it wasn't really legally "reckless." The jury disagreed and found her guilty. The penalty was still quite minimal; but the woman had rather stupidly paid several thousand dollars for legal representation that she didn't really need, and didn't work out for her anyway.







24 year old guy, driving his sister's car, forgot how to drive and he smashed into another car and he then quickly made the horrible decision to just flee the scene. He drove past a responding police car and then he decided he definitely did not want to talk to the police either; which added a pursuit charge onto the hit and run charge. His trying to outrun the police idea would have worked better had he not gone down a dead end road. Before the pursuing officer could catch up to him, the kid jumped out of his car and ran on foot into the woods, disregarding the police officer's yelled commands to stop running. The kid had enough of a head start to get away from the officer and he disappeared into the woods. I arrived a minute later and surveyed the area; the guy had lucked out with a pretty expansive area of woodland to run into; a good square kilometer of solid trees and bushes, complete with huge gullies and hills. I found a nearby power line access road that was clear enough to walk uphill; I walked up 300 yards and found a side trail around the same time and place that I thought I heard some sticks breaking nearby in the woods. I went about 50 feet onto the trail and stopped. Silence. Must have been a bird, I thought. I stood and stared around for awhile; concluding that if the guy laid low, we would absolutely never find him. As I turned to leave, I suddenly saw the guy, not 40 feet away from me. He was crouched down, praying that I would not see him. If he had been behind the big tree instead of in front, I never would have seen him. I took him into custody and then he went off to jail. I later measured the distance online; he had run a third of a mile through the thick woods..and stopped running right in the one exact area where I wound up randomly walking to, a third of a mile away from the ditched car. I will readily admit that it was just dumb luck on my part catching him; no real skill was involved in that one! My first words to him when I saw him: "It is just not your day, huh?"





The scene is: my patrol car. In the car wash. The kind where you drive onto the track and your car gets rolled through and past the brushes and water jets and I leaned too far forward while cleaning the dashboard and hit the horn with all the gear on my load-bearing tactical vest. But this was my brand new patrol car that had the old horn-is-actually-a-siren sound effect modification, so what happened was my siren immediately activated. Say, do you want to guess how loud a siren is, in a car wash? Well I can attest it's pretty fucking loud. My car was so new to me that I had not even realized the horn was actually a siren, so in an effort to turn it off I hit the horn again, which did not in fact turn it off; it just cycled it into a different siren sound. Each successive frantic pound on the steering wheel only changed the siren sound; it would not turn off. In near panic I finally found the siren off switch on the control box near the police radio console, and finally the siren shut off. Now in the middle of all of that, the car wash girl figured I had just got dispatched to some kind of major emergency and couldn't wait to get out of there, so she turned the whole car wash abuptly off, complete with an its own loud buzzer warning sound. When she came in to check on me, I sheepishly admitted I had accidently set off the siren and there was no problem, really. I felt quite bad for the poor driver who had been right in front of me in the car wash; I was going to apologize profusely to him or her after I got out but whoever was in that car did not stick around; they immediately left the second they could get out of there past the dryer.

Apartment manager called 911 to report nobody had seen one of the tenants for a couple weeks, but his car was present in the parking lot, and the tenant was known to have a lot of serious health problems….so….probably dead.. On my way to the dispatch, the reporting party called again with an update: "Went to tenant's front door – smells really bad in there." Myself and another officer arrive, and sure enough the area near the front door smells like warm death. Pertinent to this story is the fact it was a very hot August; temperatures had been 90+ for the past week. The manager hands us the door key and when we opened the door a thick swarm of giant, well-fed black houseflies go past us, all desperate for air fresher than what was in the dark and putrid apartment. Yep, the guy is in there and he is two weeks dead on his bed. Alcoholic. As we're poking around in there looking for clues (like his most recent alcohol receipts and outgoing phone calls on his phone) I'm breathing through my mouth, which was slightly better than through my nose, and I kept thinking "If any one of these left over super-sized black flies go into my mouth, I am going to immediately throw up everything I've eaten in the past week." So I had to keep my mouth covered to keep the flies away. The coroner showed up to remove the body, but said he'd need some help notifying the next of kin – in this case, the guy's ex-wife who was at her nail salon in town. Now, not being a complete moron, I had noticed that there was only one coroner, and the rotting dead guy was well over 200 bloated pounds. Meaning the coroner was definitely going to need some help picking up the corpse. In all fairness, I let the other officer have an opportunity to do the next of kin notification but when he didn't volunteer after a quarter second I offered to do it. So I left to go tell the lady her ex-husband had died, and missed the part where the other officer and the coroner peeled the guy off his bed and large chunks of his skin stayed behind, with crawling maggots in the juices. Actually, I don't feel like I missed any of that.



I went to a domestic dispute call involving a dad and his teenage daughter, arguing over house rules. The dad pulled me aside and moaned that his daughter was ungrateful and she should be respecting him more, especially since he had just put $3,000 dollars on his credit card to get her a really good seat at the Brittney Spears concert in Tacoma. Based on what the inside and outside of the house looked like, there was not enough money in the bank to pay that card off anytime soon.







A vacant house between owners had attracted a family of squatters that we had to keep chasing out. Memorable because the house had 5 bedrooms, 6 bathrooms, a large indoor swimming pool bigger than the garage, and the whole thing was 5,782 square feet. Absolute monster of a house. The reason why it was empty was because it had been built in 1975 and it showed; hideous carpet, hideous walls, doors, and trim and cabinets were all dark wood, the bathrooms had 1970's vintage toilets and counters and mirrors…Eventually it was bought by a navy captain who had a couple extra hundred thousand dollars needed to renovate.









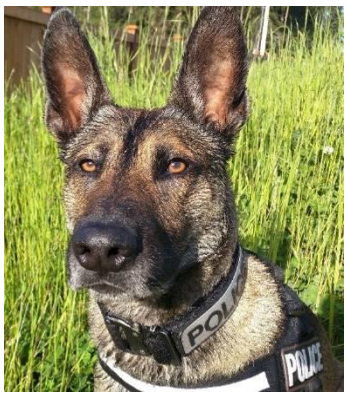


First Lutheran Church: late at night, a ladies' church group was going on and one of the attendees was parking her car in the exact same space and time when and where another old lady was walking across the parking lot in front of the moving car. There was a bit of a slope in the parking lot, contributing to the fact that the driver could not see the pedestrian. The lady walking in front of the car got run over, completely. As in she got completely jammed up underneath the car, with her legs bent back horribly up by her head and not in a good way and she died under that car, and it was a bit of a mess getting the car off of her.

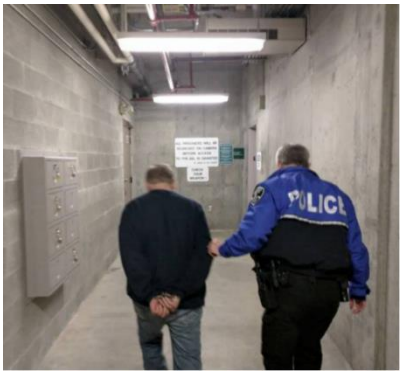




Car crash scene, with a significant injury: the passenger had got smeared between the moving car and a non-moving tree; he lived but some arm meat got smushed off his arm onto the tree. The deputies and officers present were amazed to see some large flies show up within minutes and start a recycling program; within an hour all of the flesh was all gone.


Twice in my career I've chased fugitives who wound up running into restaurants, all the way into and through the kitchen areas in an attempt to get away from me. Neither were successful attempts; both were aprehended.






I'm in a woman's apartment. She's a professional full-time drunkard with a blood alcohol content so high that when she passes out too much and can't get in her normal daily intake of several bottles of vodka the delirium tremens start up, which in her case always included severe diarrhea, not limited to the bathroom. This is about the 8th time I've had to go check on her, and every time ended with her going away in an aid car for treatment. I'm quite disappointed because she had completely ruined the carpet of her new apartment, just like the carpet in her previous apartment that she got kicked out of. I'm disappointed because her new landlord clearly did not do a very good background check on her and now he was going to have get new carpeting and he was a good guy and didn't deserve that, even though he did neglect to do the background check on her.






Shoplifter went into a hardware store and stole, of all things, a large hydraulic tire jack. Store employees noticed when he walked out with a bulge in jacket. Then he did the most colossal dumb thing; he put the jack in his car, and then came back into the store and continued to look around. The manager went out to the guys truck, saw the stolen merchandise in there, and called the police. I showed up and met the manager outside. I told him that I was not legally allowed to get into the truck, even though I could clearly see the stolen jack. But I would not stop the manager from looking, so he opened the door and scanned the merchandise with his portable checkout scanner, and of course it matched the missing inventory in the store, so I went back inside and arrested the guy. He got called in to court a month later, and made some deals for continuances and deferments; and a whole year later he was still showing up to court at regular intervals, dealing with his own stupidness.





Dead guy apartment: dead guy is still present, having just died in his Depends and nothing else, sitting upright on his couch, still holding onto his walker, if that paints enough of a picture for you. He had lived there for about 30 years; he was in fact the only one to ever live in that unit, having moved in right after it was built. He had decorated the interior with some really bad décor back then, and had left it all up there for 30 years while he smoked his life away. I caught a glimpse of a picture hanging on the wall slightly askew, showing a different color under where it used to hang. In this case, white instead of brownish yellow. So I went over to the couch and removed one of the paintings, a hideous cowboy painting that would have been outdated by 1978. The square patch of wall behind the painting: pristine white. The rest the of the wall; brownish yellow. Yep, the guy had been a heavy non-stop smoker and there was exhibit B. (exhibit A was the dead guy himself). The coroner was so impressed he photographed the discolored wall; as it clearly showed what the guys' main hobby had been.





One night around midnight a guy called 911 to report his buddy was suddenly missing; they were a couple of hobos walking through town, and when they got to an intersection the missing guy disappeared without a trace. I responded along with a fire and aid crew since the buddy had apparently jumped off the highway down a near-vertical embankment near a creek and culvert; we looked all over in the bushes and creek but never found the guy. I suspect he was getting tired of his walking partner and decided to ditch him. Or maybe he wasn't even real to begin with.

I'm at a holiday party, hosted by a prosecutor and her husband. A guy in the living room is looking at me funny from across the room. He looks vaguely familiar and keeps catching my eye, making me feel uncomfortable. Mystery solved when he approaches me and reminds me that I had arrested him a year previous for a DUI. As always, my discomfort level rose even more then. Which is odd, because HE was the one who broke the law...why was it ME who then felt weird about the whole thing? Kind of hard to enjoy a party when a former customer of mine is there like that, you know?







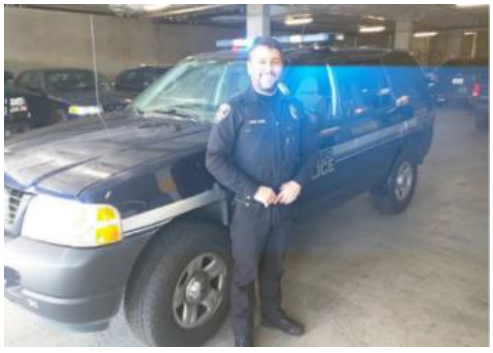
I refer my stepson to the local car wash after seeing a "help wanted" sign out front. The owner, a grumpy old man, declines to even interview him because he didn't like his long hair. He wound up hiring a 20-something year old kid with a short haircut. I guess hair length was more important that a clean background, because the new guy he hired was a convicted felon with mulitiple convictions. He only lasted a few months there before getting caught stealing from the owner. Shortly after that, the owner gave up and sold the business. I was of course glad to see him go.





Another shoplifter at the Walmart call: they come in a shapes and sizes and ages and demographics. This one was a 45 year old woman who was desperate for about ten dollars in cash so she took a couple items off the shelves and returned them at the return counter, saying she didn't have a receipt. Which was the truth, technically. The Asset Protection Associates caught her; they only called me because the woman was squawking so much about getting caught. When I showed up and checked her record I found she was a convicted felon. Knowing that the theft did not warrant a booking into the jail, I figured the least I could do would be to let her boyfriend know what was going on. He was out in the parking lot waiting for her to come out. I made her call him and tell him why she was in the security office and going to jail. She of course didn't want to call him but I told her this was her only chance so with great reluctance she called him and told him what she had just done. Then I left.






You know those cute little free library cabinets on posts that people make and put outside to hold free books? Well somebody called 911 one day to report that a couple books had been replaced with some 1970's vintage gay porn magazines.

A Canadian woman calls our local 911, quite perplexed that an online search of herself shows that she owns property in Poulsbo where she has never lived. I call her back. She has questions. I have no answers. I direct her to the county government website, which shows the property owner is in fact somebody else. I suggest the weird search result was probably a scam to get her to pay money for more information. She scoffed. I insisted it was scam. I still can't believe she called 911 from another country to ask a police officer questions about that.







It's 1 am and I'm sound asleep because I have to go into work extra early at 3 am and so I took a sleeping pill which is working great but now I'm getting disturbed because a siren is blaring nearby; must be an aid car responding to a medical emergency, but it sounds really close like it's in my neighborhood. Which is weird, because the aid crews don't use their sirens in residential areas, especially in the middle of the night. I'm still half asleep, siren is louder than ever, it must be a police pursuit coming through the area. A few seconds go by and my brain is struggling to overcome the sleeping pill, the siren is now very loud and it sounds like a pursuit has ended literally in my driveway because that's where the siren is. I stagger awake and go to the nearest window and look outside. No police cars or stolen cars or fleeing suspects or police activity in sight, only my police car parked in the driveway. With the siren on, full blast. I then wake up fully, and in complete horror realize that yes, it is my goddamn siren that is on, and I am acutely aware that in the 20-acre housing development that I am almost right in the middle of, there are 183 other houses surrounding mine. No time to put on clothes, I grab a bathrobe and run out to my car. Fumble with the remote control way too much. Finally get in, and stare in panic at the siren controls because this is a brand new make and model of patrol car for me. I fumble in the darkness and finally manage to turn the siren off, and the echoes of it bouncing off 183 other houses fades into nothing. What the fuck happened? Well we figured out later that if the siren switch is physically moved back and forth quickly (which I had done on my previous shift while responding to something important) the relay switches can't keep up and the siren will turn "off" even when clicked onto an "on" setting. No big deal until you add in a new feature that our patrol cars got; which was an auto-on engine function, designed for saving gas. Specifically, an officer could go to a scene – like at an accident – and turn off the engine, but leave all the emergency lights flashing to alert and detour traffic. They would run on battery power alone, and when the battery got low, the engine would automagically turn on and recharge, and then later turn off again, allowing the lights to run for hours and hours without running the engine the whole time. Super nifty. Unless the engine turns itself on at 1 am to top off the battery, and the siren switch was inadvertently left in an "on" position. Then the siren will kick on and wake everybody the fuck up. So there I was, sitting my in patrol car in the dark, having just managed to turn off the siren. I was completely drenched in sweat, heart pounding, pretty much completely horrified. I looked out the windshield and saw, to my complete dismay, my neighbors across the street out on their porch. Looking at me like WTF. I turn my head and the house next to me, yep, those folks are also outside staring at me. I turn the other way, there are more residents outside staring at me. I slink down in my seat and try to calm down. Eventually everybody goes back into their houses. When I peek around and see nobody is watching anymore, I go back inside and try to relax. Impossible, of course. I actually tried to fall back to sleep but that was not going to happen because I thought "what if that siren goes off AGAIN?" and the more I thought about it, like leaving a toaster plugged in, I had to go back outside and confirm the GD siren was off. Went back inside, another 30 minutes later I had to go outside again to double confirm. I think I went there a total of three more times after the first time. The only good part about that whole thing was that there were 2 other police officers living in that neighborhood, so except for the people on my part of the street, everybody else would not have known for sure which one of us was the offender. Also, I'll point out that the entire neighborhood was crime free that night. I also wondered for how long that siren had been going until I heard it? The next day, one of my coworkers who lived a street over said it had been on for well over a full minute.





I still have a bit of siren PTSD from that incident. I later came across a website where a company was selling toy model police cars; they could be personalized to match any department's color and graphics scheme, and they had super cool fully functional little red and blue LED lightbars and corner strobes and even grill lights and rear deck lights, and a siren feature if one wanted that but I realized absolutely not no way would I ever want a model police car that had a siren sound in it. It would give me flashbacks, and not in a good way. I'm scarred.





Prosecutors sent me a subpoena to appear for a court case involving a felony theft; my testimony was needed in trial. I was less than thrilled about testifying, because I had finished, filed, and forgotten the police investigation…three and half years earlier.







I caught a kid (19 or 20 years old) who had a suspended license, so I called for a tow truck and his car got impounded. He contested the impound with the department of licensing, and in a special appeal hearing he told the hearing examiner that the officer involved (me) did not have probable cause to stop him, and therefore the whole thing was invalid. The hearing examiner said "okay then" and had the tow bill and daily storage fees from the tow truck company sent to the police department so we could pay the $800 dollars instead of the driver. When the tow company sent the bill to the PD, my supervisor freaked out and got a copy of the audio recording that had been made during the hearing. Because the kid's statement about no probable cause was a complete lie made under oath, the prosecutor readily agreed to file a perjury charge against him, which the kid eventually pled guilty to and got on his permanent record. It didn't slow him down too much though; the last time I checked on him that guy (kid no longer) he had accumulated over 400 documented police contacts by age 30. And those were just the incidents important enough for officers to bother putting into the database. His contact/arrest ratio was pretty impressive; averaging a jail booking every 3 ½ months for a sustained 13 years, to yield a very impressive total of 43 jail booking photos. His 44th booking photo was (finally) at a state prison.







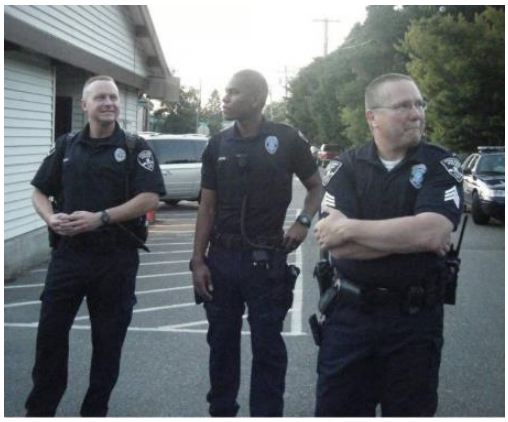
The new guy on patrol is in the squad room, typing a report. He finishes, and leaves the building without logging off. Meaning his account, on one of the shared computers, is open. We can't have that, so I taken it upon myself to teach him a lesson. I'll be nice and not send out a silly email to just everybody this time, pretending to be him. But his account ID/profile picture definitely got changed from The Punisher to Taylor Swift. Then his screen background photo got changed from a police sniper to a cartoon drawing of Dora the Explorer. Over the years, the number of officers I did that to: about 8. Number of times it happened to me: about 3.

A mountain biker was riding along the highway pretty fast and jumped off a curb; he landed on some road gravel left over from the wintertime sanding trucks and he slid slideways and flipped over and crashed spectacularly on the pavement and broke his leg as badly as one can without getting a broken end sticking out. The biker was able to self-diagnose his damage and report to me the injuries sustained pretty accurately, because he was a BIFD paramedic. He was loaded into an aid car and rushed off to the hospital. I found out later that he was out of work for almost a year, recovering.



I pull a guy over for not wearing his seat belt. He goes sputtering apoplectic on me, insisting this is 100% police harassment because this is the third time I've stopped him in the last 6 months. He points out that no other police officer has ever stopped him in the last 8 years he's lived in the area, and I am totally targeting him. I told him that I most certainly was not after him specifically, and that I could not even remember the first two times. The one thing we did agree on though, was that if he had been wearing his seat belt each time, I would not have stopped him. So there's that.







A very large tugboat sank one night while it tied up alongside a dock. A salvage diver was hired to seal up all the portholes and vents and doors so the ship could be prepped to be re-floated. A week later it was discovered that the diver had in fact removed a lot of the brass portholes and fittings. Apparently those things were pretty valuable. Yeah, it was pretty much the complete opposite of what he had been hired to do. Took another salvage company about a month to then seal up all the holes and raise the boat.





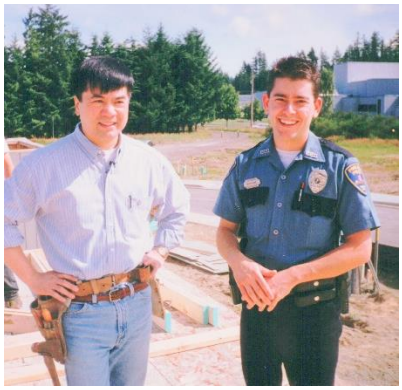
I was called to mitigate an issue between a couple of grown adults who had just broken up; the male half had moved out and the next day came back for his cats, but his ex-girlfriend could only account for two of them. There had been three.





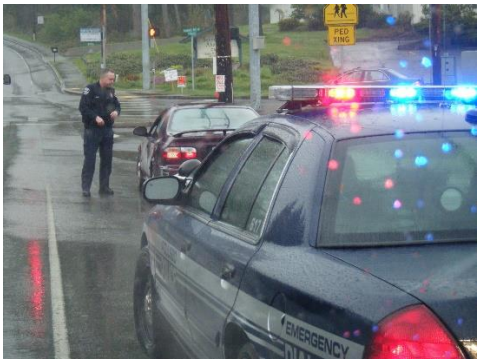
I knew police officers who received awards and recognition from vice presidents, and I knew a cop who joined the secret service and was part of the executive protection detail for the President #43. The best I ever did was meet a couple of WA state governors.







I was checking on an old abandoned house in an overgrown field; the house had been vacant for 10 or 15 years and was attracting the occasional bored teenagers with spray paint. Poking around in the basement, I made a rare find: The shelves had been lined with newspapers, by the original occupants, a few decades earlier. The shelves were empty but the newspapers remained. They had been locally published, but printed in the Norwegian language, for the benefit of all the local transplants who had come from Norway back in the day and preferred their native language over American. How cool is that.







Me, in a dead woman's house. She had died of natural causes so it was not a crime scene or anything; just a typical investigation and then the coroner showed up to remove the body. While we were in there, we saw on a bookshelf some certificates, photos, and momentos from her career that she had retired from, as some kind of an analyst with the Central Intelligence Agency.











I'm talking to a 28 year old guy on his girlfriend's front porch about some issues going in the house involving little kids. The fact that he had about 15 tattoos and piercings on his face -which complimented his huge floppy gauge earrings nicely – might or might not have contributed to my spidey sense tingling. "I'm just wondering," I told him, looking for a reaction, "..If I should have CPS come out and check things out." He immediately said "Oh no need, CPS was out here just a couple of days ago!"





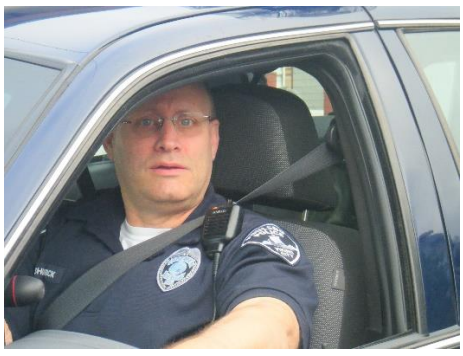
When I first started my career in policing, my small town had no homeless folks. Fast forward 27 years and at any given time we had several; admittedly very minor league numbers compared to other cities but still a significant increase for our area. One of the homeless women wore latex gloves 24/7 because she said she was allergic to paper. I seriously doubted that was her real problem; she was quite mentally ill. I never asked her any questions specific enough to confirm or deny, but I presume her paper allergy must have included toilet paper, too?





We had another homeless guy who would regularly build himself cardboard forts behind businesses or restaurants; he would raid cardboard dumpsters for his building supplies and drag them over to whatever alcove he found.





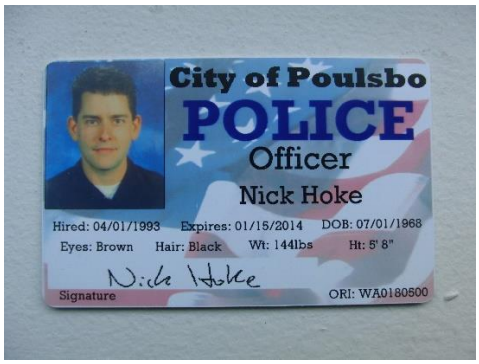






I was never bribed to get out a ticket but many flustered motorists have handed me their debit cards or credit cards instead of their drivers licenses, to their complete embarrassment. I'd just tell them "I don't have a card reader for that.." I also had a few (too few, actually) women try to flirt with me. I had more cry though. The crying might get you out of a ticket (it worked with me) but you have to start crying BEFORE the officer takes your license away back to the patrol car. After he's written a ticket it can't be cancelled so there's no use crying then.







I responded to an apartment complex with an aid crew for a young lady who was having some extreme distress; the illegal drugs she took were not agreeing with her and she needed some help. I get there first and find a 19 year old woman in a slightly altered mental state, with generalized disorientation. She was so out of it that she didn't think twice about walking out her front door into the exceedingly bright (for her) sunlight. Naked. She walked down the walkway and I was rewarded with seeing the surprised look on my partner's face as he arrived on the scene, came around the corner on foot and almost ran into her. The aid crew took her away to the hospital.





A recreational boater had gone too far north into the bay and almost run aground. Good news: he didn't get stuck. Bad news: he bumped one of his prop shafts hard enough to punch it up into the hull, creating a hole big enough for a lot of water to pour into. I found him tied up to dock with an emergency pump running at full blast, but only just enough to keep up with the water coming in. That guy was in what you could call.. A Predicament.

The owner of a hair salon called the police because one of the hair stylists had been kicked out by her, but the stylist did not want to leave. I showed up and asked the stylist why in the world she was staying there, very unwanted, when the owner had told her to GTFO. The stylist said she had rented her space there and pre-paid for the month, so she wanted to stay until the end of the month. I told her it doesn't work that way, she needed to leave and she could get a refund from the owner. Then we discovered the real reason why the stylist was still there; she had placed a discreet video camera on a shelf and had evidently been hoping somebody was going to use force against her to get her to leave.



A middle aged woman with some severe anxiety and depression disorders has changed her meds with her doctor's guidance but the medication is most definitely not working for her, because she is now completely freaking the fuck out in her bedroom; acting like an absolute raving mad lunatic. Her husband is pretty calm about it, he's seen it before. Myself and another officer talk to her (or try to talk to her) and a medic crew arrives; eventually we talk her into a trip to the emergency room. Two days later, back on the right medications, she was presenting herself out in public, looking and acting totally normal. It happens.





Somebody had managed to remove a payphone from a payphone booth, take it into the woods, and using brute force and hand tools, broke it open to the get the quarters inside. Yeah, this was back in the days when payphones were still around. With quarters in them. Somebody had called 911 and reported finding the payphone, so there I was staring at it. Although that was the first payphone violated that I'd seen like that, I did once come across a similarly-violated store cash register dumped and torn into, in a swamp. It happens.

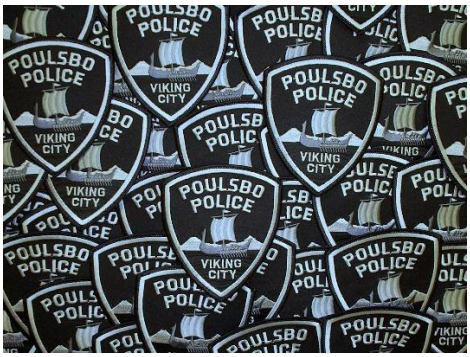








Because of Poulsbo's strong Scandinavian heritage, complete with mulitiple visits from the Norwegian royal family over the years, and sister cities in Norway, it was not unsurprising when one of my coworkers hosted a visiting Norwegian police officer for a ride along one day. Memorable because she described to us how police officers there have to go to a police academy that is two years long. Also she was a natural Nordic blonde.







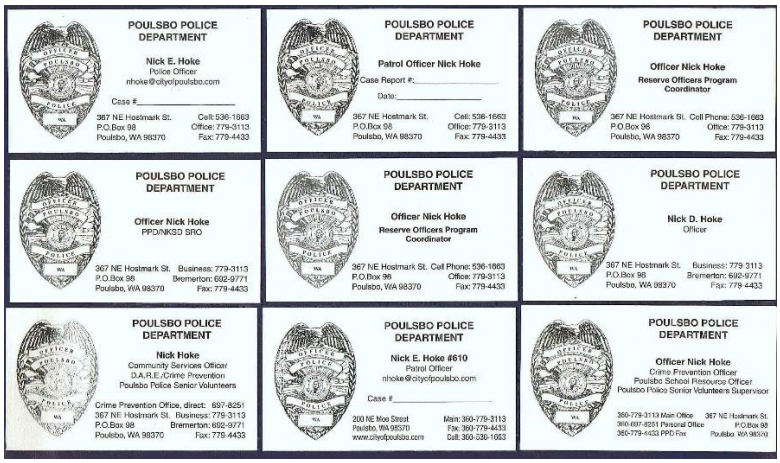
Parents of a teen runaway were getting frustrated with the juvenile justice system; but then they had figured out that their wayward teenager could be brought into court and face a judge, who could impose some civil restrictions on the kid that would be enforceable with court sanctions if the house rules were violated. The teen girl was a chronic runaway, so we all thought holding her accountable with consequences was a fanstatic idea. "I have this paperwork ready to petition the court but I can't present it until she comes back home from wherever she ran off to," the exasperated mother told me. I didn't understand. "What do you mean she has to be in court too? It's a Youth At Risk Petition! You should be able to file it today without her being present." The mother pointed to a section in the paperwork and told me to read it. It said the Youth At Risk juvenile person needed to be present in court so a lawyer could be there to represent them. Not only that, it very specifically stated that the kids' lawyer would first review the petition and see if there were any grounds to have it dismissed outright, right off the bat. Because apaprently we can't have juvenile court judges just telling kids that if they keep running away from home and ignoring their parents they could get locked up for a weekend..teens have rights too, you know.





I caught quite a few folks over the years who had stashed contraband in their clothes. Sometimes when they saw me coming they didn't have time to look for a pocket. To make this educational, I'll tell you that if you put drugs up a sleeve, you'll be okay with your hands in the air. But the when the nice police officer tells you to put your hand down, the drugs and/or paraphernalia will probably fall out onto the ground at that point.

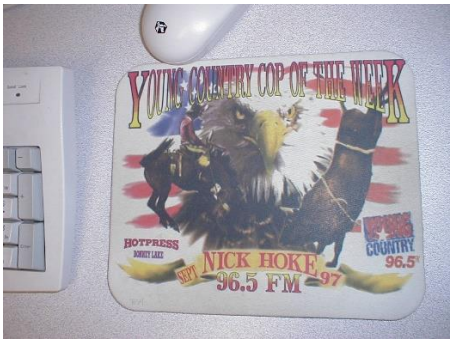
During my time in Poulsbo, I met more than a few folks who shared with me stories about jobs and careers they had; I met a guy who had been a professional movie stuntman in Hollywood; he had been in a lot of movies. I don't know if it had been worth it though; his body was a wreck and he was in just about constant pain. Speaking of contant pain, I got called out to a house once where a 22 year old guy was very agitated and just generally mad at the world. His parents told me that he had thrown himself so much into high school baseball -with the goal of going pro- that by the time he was 20 years old he had just about permanantly destroyed both of his shoulders and both of his knees and now addicted to opiates.





Not done yet talking about meeting folks with interesting jobs.. I knew two older gentlemen in town who had worked for NASA during the Apollo space program. One of the guys had been a flight director, and the other guy had been some kind of a manager ..I can't remember what he had done exactly but I do remember he had an absolutely superb model collection in his den; all kinds of professional museum quality scale rockets and spacecraft, and certificates and random things like space shuttle tiles and random spare parts from various space program projects. It was super impressive.







Me, talking to a sad, 60 year old homeless woman who was living out of a pickup truck. She said her kids hated her and her husband had recently died. "What did he do for a living?" I asked. "He was a cook," she replied. "Worked for twenty years at IHOP." Long pause while I figured what the likelihood was that IHOP offered pension plans to their cooks. Based on admittedly very incomplete information – my own observation of the condition of the old woman living in truck – I concluded IHOP probably did not have an actual retirement plan for their cooks. Hence, the homeless widow living in the pickup truck situation.





Burglar snuck into a house at 7 am; the front door had been left unlocked. The family dog in the living room started barking, and scared the burglar way. I told the family the dog should get a bowl of gravy or something for being just the Goodest Boy. Also, keep your doors locked, everybody!

An old guy in a parking lot has a scammer on the phone, and his wife calls 911 on her phone for a police officer. I show up and they explain that in an effort to get an Amazon Prime movie to load on their ipad, they wound up calling some kind of an Apple Tech Support number, and the guy on the other end of the phone had already got $600 dollars' worth of gift card numbers from them. "Is your ipad working now?" I asked him. "Uh, no!" they said. "Well hang up the phone already, you're getting scammed!" They insisted I talk to the tech support guy, because the phone number "Looked like an Apple account number." I explained how phone numbers and caller ID's could be spoofed easily and the scammer was probably in Africa or Jamaica. Although as soon as I heard his voice I identified him as from India. I told them they were lucky they had only lost $600 dollars. And then I told the old guy he'd better change his phone number because he was definitely going to be getting all kinds of calls from now on, and he should not trust the caller ID's. His wife then hung up the phone, but first she yelled at the scammer in India: "I curse you! I hope your penis falls off!"





Car crash; a driver had stopped in the roadway for a pedestrian on a crosswalk. The driver's car got struck from behind by another car; hard enough to classify the struck car as being "deep trunked" with extensive damage to the entire rear of the car. The driver was in pain enough to get an ambulance ride to the hospital. As she was being strapped onto the stretcher she told me that unlike the last time I had seen her, she was wearing her seatbelt this time. I had pulled her over a couple months' previously for not wearing her seat belt. I can't remember if I had given her a ticket or a warning, but whatever I had done had made enough of an impression on her to start buckling up after that. We were all in agreement that if she had not been wearing her seat belt during the accident, she would have most likely been punched out of her seat into the dashboard and windshield.





Somebody called 911 to report a handicap parking violation near the boat launch. I responded to the scene and found a truck with a boat trailer was indeed parking in a handicapped reserved spot. Sideways. Actually taking up a half-dozen spots; all of them were reserved disabled parking spots. So that was an easy ticket to write. As I was putting the $550 ticket on the windshield, I saw the owner running up from the boat launch; he had obviously just put his boat in the water and decided it would be okay to park his truck sideways over a whole row of reserved parking spots. I quickly left before he could stop me and beg for mercy. He was lucky I only wrote him one ticket.









I knew a number of officers who had what we called “unintentional discharges” or “accidental discharges” of live rounds from the guns in locations other than the firearms range. Things shot that shouldn’t have been included: the police car parking lot at the PD, the officer’s locker room floor, and a countertop, and one time, a guy in a tree. In that one, a deputy was going to taser the guy out of the tree but she confused her gun with the taser…uh..she’s not a deputy anymore. Because it’s bad policy to taser people from heights. Oh, also the whole mixing-up-the-gun-with-the-taser thing was problematic.







The mad pooper struck again: this time behind a church building in the playground. A surveillance recording identified him as a local homeless schizophrenic man. He didn’t do it often, but enough to get a reputation among the police. A week later I encountered him in such an aggravated state (him not me) that I chose to disengage from my contact; I knew that if I tried to control him any way it would end up with me tasering him, at the very least. So I let him just wander off, ranting and raving.





Old lady drove her adult son’s really nice BMW sedan to the medical center. While there, she didn’t notice there was a 3 foot drop between the upper and lower lot, with a concrete wall and ledge between. She managed to drive right over it, and bounced off the hood of a jeep that was parked in the lower lot. Somehow she didn’t notice that thing, either. The car landed with almost no (visible) damage, which I’ll never be able to understand. Grandma than reparked it, no big deal and walked into her physical therapy appointment. A witness called 911 and I found grandma (in her 80’s) waiting in the lobby and we had a little chat. I then talked to her physical therapist and told him she might have damaged herself a little more from driving over the ledge and jeep. I then called her adult son, who then told me that was the last time she was ever going to drive a car; he sent for a taxi to come pick her up, and a tow truck to get his BMW.





For a couple years there was a weekly church youth group event at a big church in town, and it attracted a lot of teenagers. Turns out that a lot of them skipped church and went over to the Dairy Queen across the street to hang out for a couple hours. This was in the days before texting and social media had been invented, so it filled a need for kids to socialize. They had their parents drop them off in the front of the church, and then the kids would pretty much immediately go over to the DQ and skip the whole getting to know Jesus part. After a few months it started to get so crowded and raucous that the DQ manager had to hire security officers to keep a lid on things, and the police were getting called almost every time to break up scuffles. We called them the "Tuesday Night Fights." And of course all the kids went back to church at pick up time, and you know their parents – completely clueless – would ask their kids "So how was the youth group meeting? and the kids would probably say "Great! We learned about Jesus! Eventually the youth minister gave up on the Tuesday night fights/meetings and peace returned to the Dairy Queen parking lot.



Speaking of pre-internet, it was very common back in the old days for teenagers to hang out in groups in (certain) parks and (specific) grocery store parking lots. The park meetings usually involved a lot of cigarette smoking and fight clubs after school, and the grocery store rendezvouses were on weekend nights. Both kinds of events attracted the attention of the police regularly. It was interesting to see how social media – the ability for kids to communicate online – pretty much completely replaced the practice of kids congregating in large groups out in public anymore.





Burglary at a resident's large detached garage. Stolen: 1 car battery. Specifically, a small six-volt battery from an old antique English car. The owner and I were both all like what the hell, who would steal an old six volt battery?

I worked in the same town long enough to meet a LOT of local resident dogs over the years. Some of them that I still remember: Romeo, Magnus, Enzo, Duncan, Bilbo, Spuds, Cole, Odin, Radar, Tiny, Mojo, Aiko, Marley, Kitty Kat, Duke, Max, and Kevin. Hm…looks like I forgot several dozen other dog names by now though.





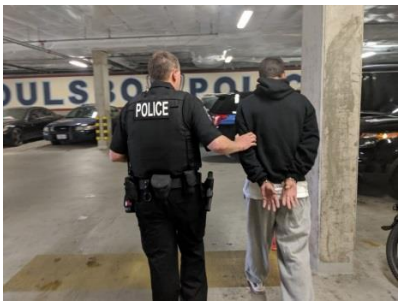
Large delivery truck lost its brakes, going downhill. The driver, knowing there was a busy intersection at the bottom of the hill, quickly and wisely decided to aim for a spot to the side of the road and take his chances there. He flew through a parking lot, took out a carport, and crashed into a tree right before a good 30-foot drop off would have really ruined his day. Injuries to himself: none. Injuries to others: also none. Slow clap for that guy.





Crazy man in a motorhome, doing his usual freaking out screaming and yelling and flailing of arms. He needed to be involuntarily committed for a mental evaluation. Myself and several other officers spent about 40 minutes talking to him, trying to calm him down. The reason we spent that much time was because we were all sporting our new bodycameras and we were well aware that we could no longer use the tried and true, quick and efficient method of resolving the problem by utilizing old-school hands-on use of force. No. We had to be kinder, and gentler. Sigh..40 minutes is kind of long time to negotiate with a crazy guy; especially one within easy grabbing range.







I have met all kinds of people, some old, and some young, who wanted to report strangers and lurkers.. living..in their walls. Or living under their floor. Or in the ceiling. Some of those folks were clearly crazy; some could completely pass themselves off as normal and function pretty normally in society, they just had a strong belief that somebody was living "in their walls." Pointing out to them that their walls were only a few inches thick had zero effect on their thinking, because they had absolutely convinced themselves. One of those clients was an old Russian woman who called about once a week at night because of the people in the attic. Finally one of my coworkers met her at her door at night, and assured her that he had just finished scanning her attic from the outside using his new scantronic 4832LPX91 Attic Scanner, and the results showed nobody up there. The old Russian looked at him with squinty eyes and announced "You are so full of shit." Which of course caused me to lose it.

Heroin addict wandered into WalMart one night, found a discarded syringe/needle in his pocket, and so he decided to stab the sausages in the meat section a few times. And then leave the needle in one of the sausages, which somebody noticed. Video surveillance was reviewed, the police were called, I found the suspect, and arrested him. The store managers could not be sure which meat was okay and which was not, so the employees were ordered to clear out the entire meat section and throw it all away. $19,000 dollars' worth of meat. All kinds. Right into the dumpster. Oh the humanity. That one made national news. I thought for sure the guy would go to prison for a very long time but he did only a couple months in county lockup, which was very unsatisfactory for me.





17 hours into an extra-long shift, I was getting ready to call it a night, when an autistic runaway teenager turned himself in to me, reporting his stepfather was going to kill him. The kid was exaggerating, and mom came to take him home. When I got done with that case and finally clocked out, it was an 18 hour shift that had started at 3 am and finished at 9 pm. Fortunately I got 9 hours off, before my next shift started at 6 am. That one turned out to be only 10 hours, so I was pretty happy about that.







I pulled over a driver because had had neglected to put on his seatbelt. And then I discovered some more violations: he did not have any car insurance, his license was suspended, he had bought the car recently but failed to transfer the title to his name, and there were some other violations that I tacked on because he had a really, really bad attitude that needed adjusting. Final bill, payable to the Poulsbo Municipal Court: Two Thousand Four Hundred Dollars. That was one of the few times that I pointed out to him the obvious: that he if had had simply being wearing his seat belt, I would not have even given him a second glance as he drove past me.





Another seatbelt violator; an old guy driving a white pickup truck. I recognized him as a repeat offender, having pulled him over just a month previous for not wearing his seat belt then. Without complaining too much he received his second ticket from me. A month later I saw him AGAIN, still no seatbelt, which causes a third stop, and a third ticket. He was kind of mad though during that third stop. Every time had been on the same road; so it would have been pretty easy for me to get in a fourth stop and ticket #4, but after the third one when I realized that the old guy just didn't care enough to change his behavior, then there was probably no point in me continuing to write him tickets. I actually had several clients like that over the years; at some point it just got to be kind of ridiculous; I gave up on them and just let them be.





Old lady's friend easily (and very unhelpfully) convinced old lady that her (mental) health problems might be the work of an evil spirit in her house. I go visit the old lady after she calls 911 to report she can't sleep. We talk for a long time about the problems, which she said were all in her house but I could tell they were all just in her head. Finally, when I found out she was Jewish I suggested she could get a Rabbi out to cleanse her house. She quickly dismissed that idea "That won't work, I don't think the spirit is Jewish!" Me: "Well howabout a Catholic Priest then?" Her: "I don't know if it's a religious spirit or not." Quickly followed by "I'm not crazy, you know!"







Woman came to the police department with a bunch of letters written by her ex husband who was currently incarcerated in prison for a very long time. In his boredom there, he had resorted to sending hand-written letters to his teenage daughter encouraging her to have all kinds of sex with her new boyfriend – including offering helpful tips - and then write him back describing all the details. I dunno, maybe he was going to sell the letters to the other convicts there? Or were they for his own enjoyment?





Some little miscreant at an apartment complex got bored one night – this was before the internet was invented, so kids had to amuse themselves somehow – and so he helped himself to a fire extinguisher from a wall box near the apartement manager's office. Aimed the nozzle into the mail slot in the manager's door. I should mention this was a dry powder chemical fire extinguisher. He discharged it into the office, through the slot. Manager of course called 911 the next day. Her office looked like the inside of a Shake n Bake bag; absolutely everything was coated in an ivory-colored powder.



"911, what are you reporting?" "THERE'S A DOG DYING IN A HOT CAR IN THE PARKING LOT SEND THE POLICE!!" I can't count how many times I responded to calls like this. Guess how many dogs I met were actually dying. Or actually in distress. Like, maybe two. The other several dozen times the dogs were fine. Because the windows were almost always rolled down a bit. Just because a dog is panting doesn't mean it's close to death, people.





The scene is a serious-injury motor vehicle collision: two cars had both tried to occupy the same space at the same time, but from opposing trajectories at a high speed. The drivers were taken away in aid cars and I'm staring in horror and wonder in one of the cars; the brake pedal had gotten mashed and literally twisted down onto the floor. The only way that could happen would be by the foot and leg of the driver meeting it with great resistance. The photos I took of that were on my work camera (only) so I have none to share here, sadly, because I know it sounds almost unbelievable. That was just crazy horrible.



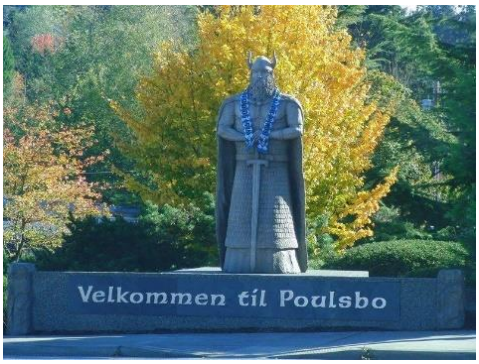




Alarm activation at the multi-plex movie theatre. Nothing dramatic, just a false alarm/accidental activation. While I was there talking to the manager, I talked my way into a behind-the-scenes tour of the place, to include the upstairs. Cool as hell: a giant long wide corridor, with movie projectors lined up on both sides, aiming down into the theatre rooms. Back in those day the projectors still used giant heavy film reels. Each projector was a huge massive contraption, about the size of a Mini Cooper, with what looked like about 4,800 moving parts.



I'm in the WalMart security office, with a prisoner in custody. He had been caught shoplifting, the police were called, and now the dispatcher is telling me that the guy has a warrant for his arrest. The thief is a little too smug when he said he knew all about that one. "It's from Jefferson County, and it's non-extraditable." His theft was not big enough to justify going to the Kitsap County Jail, so I called the Jefferson County Sheriff's Office. Asked a JCSO Deputy if they want this guy at all. Oh! They do! They will gladly meet me on the Jefferson County side of the Hood Canal bridge, if I want to drive their guy there. Why, sure. No problem. The smirk on the smug thief's face disappeared hella quickly when I told him that I was going to take him to Jefferson County, so he could get his day in court.





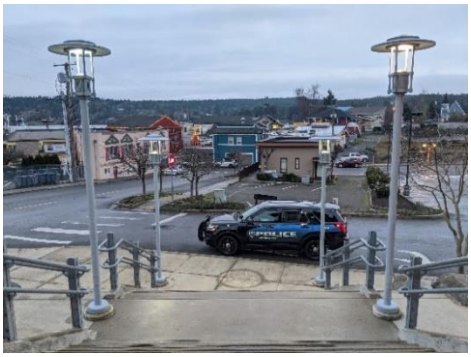


Before me on the exam table lay a dead naked human body. Okay, actually it was covered with a white sheet. Across from me was the county coroner, because this was back in the days when the county was small enough that we didn't have an appointed medical examiner, we had an elected coroner, and he was letting me witness an autopsy. Because this was back in the days when it was okay, if a police officer asked nicely, to watch an autopsy up close. I had asked nicely and permission was granted. The sheet came off, the tools came out, and the coroner went to work. "I actually knew this guy," he told me as started opening the chest. "We went to school together a long time ago.." I had thought that the procedure would be equal parts fascinating and disgusting. Turns out not quite as fascinating and not quite as disgusting as I had imagined, but still pretty interesting. "This fella had a reputation for being a chronic alcoholic, I expect his liver will be completely destroyed..ah yes, here it is.."





My knock at the door was answered by the homeowner, which was not a good move on his part because he had a federal warrant for his arrest. He asked if he could take a quick shower before he got hauled off, and I was in an agreeable mood that morning so I inspected his clothes and the shower, and let him have 3 minutes to freshen up. Then off to jail we went.







Crazy Molly had wandered away from home again. As usual, she only went downhill to the nearest gas station, where she could easily be found, just sort of hanging around. Sometimes with a cat or two in a carrier, sometimes in a raincoat, usually just in her nightgown and bathrobe and slippers. Molly was in her 70's, and dementia was her only real constant companion, because her husband had kind of stopped caring to track her down every time she escaped the house. I had the new officer take her home, because I had already had my turn several times that year so far.

Residential structure fire! Smoke pouring off a house roof! I respond to the scene with the fire department and we find the house, wet from the night's rain, catching the early morning sun just right that steam is rising from it terrifically…looking like smoke….uh…no actual fire involved. Never mind. We ain't even mad… it was the best resolution to a house fire call.





Jordan was off his meds. Jordan was in his mid-20's, and he was schizophrenic. He'd walk around town, real slowly. When the voices in his head got too loud, he'd stop walking and just..listen..to..them. This looked like him frozen on a sidewalk, with a very blank look on his face. It was not uncommon to see him out in public, frozen like a statue, for 5, 10, 15 minutes at a time…several times a week. Sometimes the voices would tell him to take his clothes off, and then the police would be called. And we'd haul him off, and our department behavioral health navigator specialist would get involved and make sure his family kept him on his meds.





Freak out mom Karen at a school bus stop reported getting in a yelling match with the school bus driver; she lost when the bus driver closed the doors on her and knocked her backward. When I talked to the school bus driver he had a different version; it started when he insisted that her little angel, after being allowed back to school after getting expelled, was directed by the school bus driver to sit up in the front where an eye could be kept on him. Mom insisted he could sit in the back. Bus driver told her that he was in charge, and the kid was going to sit up front. When Karen didn't get her way she threw her cup of coffee at the bus driver and then she fell backward, not anywhere near the bus. Freakout mom didn't know that every school bus had like 5 security cameras that recorded everything, and totally confirmed the drivers' version that she had not been knocked back by the doors. Oh and the coffee throwing was recorded, too.





Car accident: the victim driver who got hit was relatively unscathed, but marveling about how his watch got blown off his wrist; the band broke completely apart. My anwer: The steering wheel airbag deployment caused it.







911 call to a fire: I responded to the scene before the fire department did; because I was already out on patrol and in the area. I got out of my car and looked into the sewer/storm drain. It was easy to find; I just looked for the one that had smoke pouring out of it. I got on my radio and gave dispatch an update: "Yep, confirmed fire in the sewer." Because under all the smoke, orange flames.







A hit and run accident happened in a parking lot. Property damage only; no injury. Good news; there were a lot of witnesses watching from the deck of a nearby restaurant. Too bad none of the witnesses could agree on the suspect vehicle or driver; when I eventually tracked down the driver, she had different hair color, was a very different ethnicity than described, and even the car color was different than what some of the witnesses had told me. Moral of the story: eyewitness accounts can be pretty unreliable sometimes.





Me, off duty. Shopping in the WalMart. I spot at the end of an aisle one of my customers from work; I recognize the guy because I had booked him into the jail the week before for an assault charge. Me, being suddenly uncomfortable in the store. Because I don't have my uniform and gear on, I'm dressed normally like just anybody else. Me, heading for another part of the store before he sees me. I'm not scared of him; it just feels awkward to run into people like that when I'm not on duty. But I never felt anxious or vulnerable enough to compensate and carry a concealed weapon or even my badge with me off duty; I never even carried my police ID card with me off duty.







For about the fifth time in a row, the newspaper delivery person had thrown the weekly newspaper directly under my patrol car which was parked in my driveway. The first three times I thought it was just an accident, but after looking at all of the other houses on my street, I saw that they all had their papers tossed into convenient easy-to-access open areas of their driveways. So..yeah..clearly the person tossing the newspapers did not like cops, and was taking some joy in knowing it was not easy for me to get the damn paper out from under my patrol car. It took several emails from me, to the publisher, using increasingly stern language to the tell them they could just totally skip my house and stop throwing papers onto my property, thank you.







Also related: More than once I saw a car drive up to my house, see the patrol car, and keep driving. Who was driving? Random repair guys or people from craigslist, whom I had made arrangements with to fix something or buy something, but then when they saw I was a cop they decided to never mind, and just keep moving along.



Then there was the agitated drunk guy who had a warrant, and I had him handcuffed and in the back seat of my patrol car but his legs were still sticking out and I could not close the door. He was being argumentative. I was holding his open bottle of whiskey – good high quality stuff – and I told him that if he swung his legs in and cooperated, I'd let him have one last big slurp for the road. He still wanted to argue, which led to me counting down from 10, and when I got to zero and he still was arguing, I poured out the whiskey and another officer and I used brute force to shove dude into the back seat, and away we went to jail.







Postal carrier called 911 to report a resident's mailbox was getting stuff full of mail; she hadn't checked it in a couple weeks, which he was a little alarmed by. Myself and another officer went to the house, got inside, and found her dead on a couch. Thank god she had left a window open; the decomposition was well along but with enough ventilation it didn't smell too bad. She had been a local retired school teacher. Didn't have enough family who cared for her to notice her going off the grid for a couple of weeks – it was the mailman of all people who had sounded the alarm.





I'm at the Dairy Queen drive through, picking up my medium blizzard with Oreos in it, because, well because I just needed one that day. The cashier handed it to me and declined to take my payment card, saying the folks in the car in front of me had already paid for me. Jeez, that sure was nice. (I've had the happen to me about a half dozen times during my career and I appreciated the gesture every time). But police officers are not supposed to accept gratuities from citizens, so there's a mild quandary. But my benefactors are long gone and anonymous, so in this case it's ethical, I guess. I took my blizzard and made a bit of a show anyway, looking behind me and all around and then telling the girl in the window "Well I don't see my police chief anywhere around here so I'll take it, thank you!" Well guess who had been in the jeep in front of me who paid for my blizzard? I found out later...it was...wait for it...that's right, the police chief and his wife!





Somebody called 911 to report a motorcyclist crashed off the road. No further details other than the location were available, because the reporting party had been on their way to work and couldn't be bothered to you know, maybe stop and assess the situation? Two minutes later I arrived on the scene and found the motorcyclist was okay; she had just wiped out on the wet road and dumped her nice BMW cruiser into a ditch. Aside from some broken plastic, it would be okay. Her husband then showed up; a retired firefighter. He looked like walking death; too skinny and frail for his age. He was lugging around a portable chemo pump. Had pancreatic cancer. Looked like he had about a month left. The broken motorcycle was the least of their worries.





There were a number of houses and specific apartment units in town that I found myself in several times over the course of my career, for different kinds of 911 calls. Always different renters there. It was kind of cool and weird and familiar to go back and revisit those places that I had already been in like 3 times before, going back 20 years. It was kind of like visiting an old friend.







I went onto the nearby tribal reservation land, and found myself knocking on a front door. Looking for somebody. A woman answered the door. She was not the person I was looking for, but was most likely the mother of the guy I wanted. She immediately started yelling at me: "You have no jurisdiction here! Get off my property! You're not a tribal cop, you're a city cop! Get off my property!" So I left. I was thinking she might at least be curious as to why exactly I was there? But nope, she wanted no part of me. Needless to say, her son was a career criminal and her curiosity about his activities had long since evaporated.





I've seen enough things in my life that now when I hear about somebody killing themselves my first reaction is never "how sad," but: "I wonder what secrets he had?" And while everybody is crying about the tragedy of another life senselessly lost I'm wondering if he was a child molester who decided to end it all before continuing victimizing people, or maybe he was on the verge of getting caught, or maybe the guilt got to be too much? Or was he an embezzler? Or a something else?









Mid-1990's: night patrol shift. I'm at the Sands Restaurant which had been converted from a drive-in a few decades earlier. I'm sitting across from Brubaker, a crusty old patrol officer who regularly downed greasy burgers and piles of fries covered with ketchup and way too much salt. Dessert was always a couple of cigarettes. About 2 years after Bru retired, he dropped dead one day. My surprise level: pretty low, even though he was only in his mid-50's.





Woman at the front counter of the PD wants to report a theft. Specifically, someone stole! all of her opiate pills! and she needs to file a police report for theft because the pharmacist will not give her any more pills unless they were legit stolen from her. I sigh. Because I know they weren't stolen; she either ate them all herself, or she sold them on the black market and the pharmacist is on to her now. I tell her I'll only file a report if she makes her statement in writing, under penalty of perjury. So she brazenly did! Her craving for the pills overcame her reluctance to lie to the police, and she actually wrote a BS story on the statement form, and signed it, declaring it was all true. There was nothing for me to investigate, so my report was pretty short. Also no way to prove or disprove her story, so she got a police case report number to give to the pharmacy to get more pills. Of course she can only do that once with us; for her next fix she's going to have to come up with something else that doesn't involve the police. Now how many time do you think I, personally, had to deal with people who wanted to claim their oxycontin pills had been stolen? I'd say somewhere between 20 and 30. The first one or two I believed; after theat I knew they were all BS cases. Most of the complainants I was able to successfully shoo away so they didn't waste my time.





Me, in the senior citizen trailer park. An old lady is missing. Her adult daughter can't find her. The old lady's car is not in the driveway, deepening the mystery. Her cell phone is left behind on the kitchen counter, so we can't call her and ask where she is. The most likely scenario is that she wandered off who knows where, because the dementia has started to kick in. Is she in a coffee shop nearby? Or has she gone for a nature hike and gotten lost in the woods somewhere? Shit. I'm going to have to call a sergeant, and search and rescue is going to have to get called out. This is going to become a Big Deal. But suddenly! Old lady comes back home, dropped off by a friend, because they had gone to the casino to play bingo! Cancel everything, all is well now. How many times in my career did I have situations like that? Almost a dozen GD times.





Statement I heard after pulling over a traffic violator and asking what his driving record was like: "I don't usually get caught."





A domicle challenged weirdo was in a city park, weirding people out. I went in on foot and eventually found his tent nestled under some trees, but weirdo was MIA. A short while later I came across another park visitor, there with his family. He was the one who had called 911 to have a nice police officer stop by and check things out. The nice man, there with his family, was not going to leave the park just because there was a weirdo there, so his plan was to call 911 and arm himself with a 4 foot section of rebar he had somehow found. "If that weirdo wants to start anything with me, I'm ready to give him a rebar sandwich," the man told me. I spent almost an hour looking for the weirdo so I could tell him where to avoid getting a rebar sandwich, but I think he had wandered out of the park at that time.





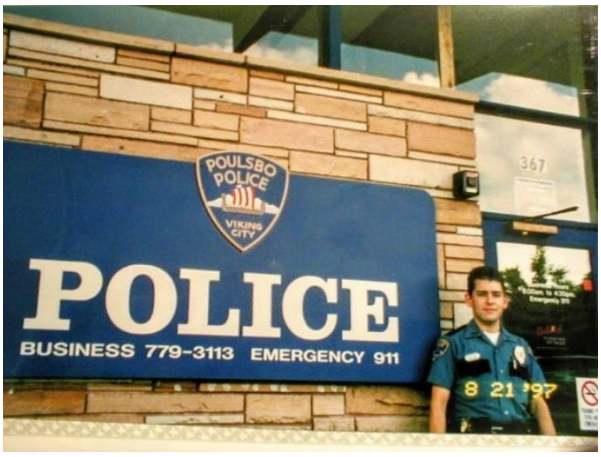
Bad car crash on the highway. The driver-turned-patient needed a helicopter ride across Puget Sound to Harborview Hospital ASAP. This was back in the 1990's, before a private air ambulance service existed, so the helicopter that responded was an olive-drab green military Bell Huey, staffed with combat medics from Fort Lewis. The WSP troopers and I shut down traffic on the highway and the helicopter landed right on the roadway next to the crashed cars, loaded up the patient, and took off again.







The alarm was going off at the large church again, because it was Saturday again and the alarm was apparently set to trip every Saturday. All of the other officers had stopped responding to the church alarms long ago, but I went anyway, just in case the alarm was caused by an actual burglar. Usually the church was empty but a couple times I found employees there, and I'd try not to yell at them too much while trying to convey how, if they have false alarms once a week, sooner or later they'd have a real alarm and the police were not to show up because reasons. The employees acknowledged it was a problem and they saw my point, but the false alarms continued to be a thing for the next several years.





During the night, a cat jumped up onto the hood of my patrol car while it was parked in my driveway. I was off duty, at home, inside asleep. After the cat got onto the hood, it was followed by a dog. Probably one of mine. I know this happened because the next day I saw my hood was absolutely covered with mud smears and footprints from two different species of pet. It looked like they had been breakdancing on the hood. After I washed all the mud and dirt off, the only evidence that anything amiss had ever happened was..a horrifying mass of claw marks and deep scratches..all over the hood.







A woman wanted a restraining order served against her ex-husband. The judge signed off on it, clearly not noticing that she had wanted him "..restrained from coming within 100,000 miles of her, her residence, and her workplace."

A helpful citizen turned in to our front counter a lost and found wallet. In the wallet were the usual credit cards and ID cards. I looked up the owner and saw she was an active duty military officer; in fact she was the first female officer (ever) to serve on an Ohio-class submarine, which had made the news. No phone numbers were in the wallet but she did have a membership card from the Seattle Experience Music Project museum, so I called them. I explained who I was, and asked them to look her up and call her directly and advise her that her wallet had been turned in to the Poulsbo Police Department. The EMP had no phone number for her though, so I was out of luck. Before I ended the call I mentioned to the nice guy on the other end of the phone that the next time he saw Paul Allen walking by (ha ha – Paul Allen the billionaire owner of the EMP) to let him know that I thought the ticket prices to get in were way too high and too expensive for me. He laughed at the idea of Paul Allen just walking around there, and he sympathized that the yes, $28 dollars per person was a bit much. He then asked me, if I were to go, how many would be in my party? Stunned, I replied "Uh, four?" He then asked for my email, I gave it to him, and he emailed me 4 admission tickets, for, uh, free! Now, are cops allowed to accept gratuities like that? Well its kind of a gray area. If a local business were to offer me a free thing, I'd decline. And I did, more times than I can count. But some phone operator guy at a Seattle Museum offers me free tickets to get in, and I'm not beholden in any way, then, yeah..I'll take them! So that's how my family and I got in to the EMP at no cost.







Several office workers looked out their window and saw a random unknown person/suspect using their work dumpster; he drove up in his car, opened the lid, and threw in several bags of his household garbage. They easily photographed his license plate and called 911. I was able to track him down and find him and his wife at their house. He was surprisingly, a young active duty military guy – USMC. I confronted him, chastised him, and pointed out that he could be held criminally liable, which would do some significant damage to his security clearance (and job) on the sub base. I went back to the office and was able to persuade the workers to not file any charges against him; they were satisfied that I had talked to him and scared him straight.







A truly crazy schizophrenic man was running amok out in public, causing a scene again. Super agitated, kinda scary actually. Myself and a sheriff's deputy had to tackle him literally in a ditch and as we struggled to handcuff him, he paused his swearing and cursing and yelling at us to suddenly spit straight up into the deputy's face from a very close proximity. How. Rude. The deputy reflexively and immediately slapped the suspect's face in retaliation, hard, making a pretty loud sound. Unfortunately for us, a newspaper photographer was present, taking pictures. He had been out driving nearby, heard the action over his police radio scanner, and had found us as we were doing our job; with his giant lens on his camera he was documenting the scene, from less than 5 feet away. So of course the guy in the ditch, despite and while trying to fight us, had also noticed the photographer. After getting smacked hard in the face with an open palm, he cried up to the photographer "Did you see that!?!" And the photographer, who happened to like the police, put down his camera and declared "Nope..I saw nothing."



When I first started my career, the fire department guys (called “firemen” back then) would sometimes ride to fire or aid calls by hanging off the back of the their larger fire trucks. One or two guys, on the back corner. There was a ledge there where they could stand, and hang onto a grab bar. If you’re my age or older, you know what I’m talking about. Sounds crazy, huh? Around the mid-90’s they stopped doing that forever, after their insurance companies got tired of paying out claims when guys fell off and hurt themselves. Man I wish I had taken some pictures of that, but it was so normal back then, it wasn’t picture-worthy.





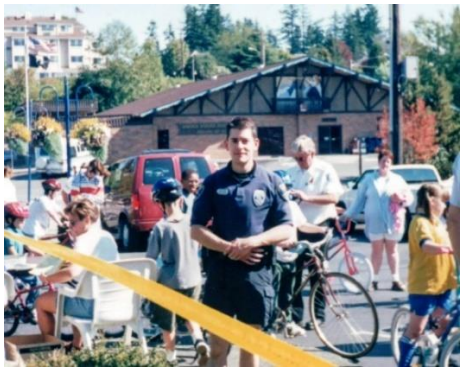


The Seattle Seahawks won another football game. About two minutes later, sure enough and as I had anticipated, CenCom dispatched me to a report of an explosion, location exactly unknown. It was a ‘hawks fan, setting off a large celebratory firework. We had a couple of those guys in town who felt like they were entitled to rattle their neighbor’s windows when their favorite team won.






The suspected drunk driver was out of his car, standing in front of me. His driving had been poor, and his standing balance was worse. He agreed to perform some field sobriety tests; one of them included a horizontal gaze nystagmus test, which involves watching and tracking eye movements. Enough alcohol will cause a slight (or extreme) jerking of eyeballs when going back and forth. I watched closely and saw his eyes were indeed jerking and bouncing a bit; he had no idea but I could see it clear enough to establish probable cause with no doubt that he had consumed way too much alcohol. A breath test at the station later confirmed it, and I issued him a criminal citation with a DUI charge.





On TV they call them APB’s but we called them BOLO’s – a Be On The Lookout dispatch for a wanted subject and/or car. I heard them over the police airwaves on the average of about once per week during the times I was on duty, and every single time it created the Baader-Meinhof phenomenon, which is what you call it when you suddenly start seeing that one certain thing. It happened to me just about every single damn time, and it even kicked in when I was advised to BOLO for the purple chevy pickup truck with the bank robber in it. Damnit there’s a purple pickup truck right across the street! WTF there’s another purple pickup truck but that’s not the right one! Sonofabitch there’s ANOTHER GD purple pickup truck over there, but that’s not the right one either!





The police station, back when it was on Hostmark Street at the end of downtown's Front Street, was less than 300 feet from the shore of Liberty Bay. So it was not uncommon for seagulls to find clams at low tide, pick them up, and drop them onto our parking lot crack them open. Or they'd drop small fish, which would get left behind if the birds got distracted or scared off. Neither was a big problem - what was way, way worse was when a great blue heron, with severe gastrointestinal distress, would do a fly over and dump a huge, massive, splattering load all over my blue patrol car parking down below. Do you have any idea how many square feet of area a madly shitting blue heron (6 foot wingspan, going 20+ mph) can cover in one pass?





A man died suddenly; he had dropped dead in his house, from some kind of a medical condition involving his heart. EMT's and paramedics rushed out there but they were not able to revive him. They called for a fire department chaplain and a county coroner, and then decided they needed a police presence too because the family was super upset. Specifically they were pissed because they felt his new wife had harangued him to death, literally. I had to stand outside the house and turn away his brother and sister in law, who were screaming at the now-widowed wife that she had killed him with stress. He was only his 40's. I felt like I should have gotten paid extra on that shift- that whole scene was a little different than average.







My house got egged one night. Because I had my patrol car parked out front. Sigh..yeah, things like that will happen. Eggs are much better than bullets though; I knew two cops who received incoming fire from bad guys in the middle of the night.









You ever see a woodchip truck on fire? It looks like a lot of smoke. The fire department guys got kind of excited about that; they decided the best way to access the smoldering mess in the giant open top trailer was to cut into it directly from the side, spilling out a few hundred pounds of wet and burned wood chips. Not too much of a tragedy though; wood chips aren't worth much and the thin aluminum sidewall of the trailer would be easily fixed.







I was not on duty though, the night that a garbage truck caught on fire. The driver noticed the smoke pouring out the back and he made a smart move; he found the nearest big parking lot he could find in the WalMart, and in a big empty area he dumped the entire load into the parking lot. The fire department had a great time hosing the fire out, and the garbage truck company called for front end loader to clean up the mess. Which was way cheaper than losing a whole garbage truck to a fire.







Dispatch sent me out to a residential neighbor for a parking complaint. I did not want to go but I had to of course. The problem was there was a ballfield at the end of the road and a junior league football game was going on; elementary school-aged kids were playing on two teams, and all of their parents were present and the cars had overflowed out into the neighborhood into posted NO PARKING areas. The residents went just about apoplectic once a week during the summer months when this happened, and the police would be called. My solution was to show up and turn on all my emergency lights. Within a few minutes most of the owners of the illegally parked vehicles would run over and move them to some other place. Any cars left over got parking tickets, which I always felt a little bad about writing. I told one car owner that if I ever won the lottery I'd buy a new ballfield for the league, in an area that had lots and lots of free parking.





Me, roadside, surrounded by police cars and fire trucks, talking to a 7 year old boy who had been riding in his father's pickup truck just a few minutes earlier. Dad had tragically fallen asleep, drifted off the road into the woods at 50 mph, and hit a downed and horizontal tree which had peeled off the roof of the truck cab. Along with a large portion of dad's head. Dad was dead in the truck. The EMT's and Paramedics put a blanket over the cab so nobody else would see the bloody mess. The boy was uninjured; he was too short for the tree to get him. What do you say to a kid in a situation like that? And just to make it really mind-numbing, he was the same age as my own son.

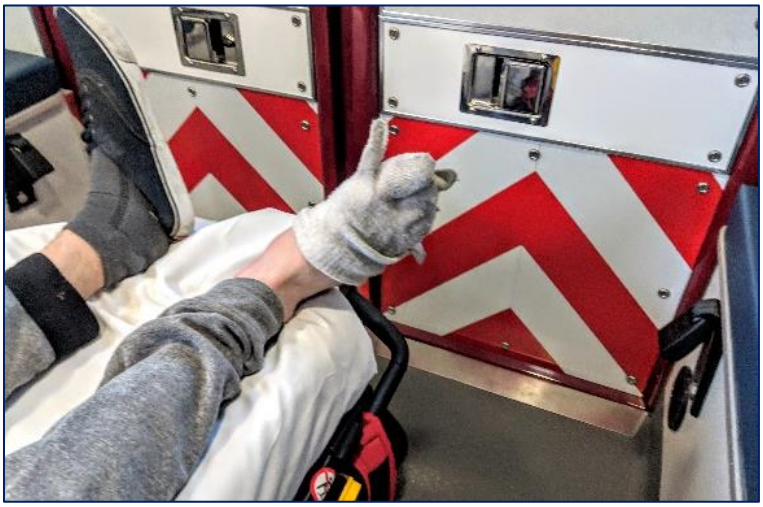




Suicidal 19 year old kid poured gasoline on himself out in the driveway. Horrified mother called 911 as he tried flicking his cigarette lighter, but it was apparently too wet to make a spark. I arrived on the scene and cautiously walked up to him, realizing too late that I really should have brought a fire extinguisher along with me. I successfully talked him out of the lighter and he went to the hospital for a mental evaluation. Yeah, that whole scene could have turned out soooooooo much worse.



You know you're shitty drunk when you wake up the next morning in a parking lot – not in a car, but just laying down on the pavement – and a cop is asking you what your story is. You're so drunk you can't even hardly move, so an ambulance is called. The nice officer suggests you put your socks on before walking to the ambulance. So you do. But one of them turns out to be a glove. But you don't notice. Cause you're still really, really drunk. When that happens, your foot will look like this:



PART III:

OTHER RANDOM

POLICE STUFF

Final chapter: some specific details and random musings about my career in policing. Mostly written here in case I ever had a grandkid someday who needs to do a school report about the old days - here's some great first hand source material about Old Man Hoke, back in the 20th century when he was a traffic cop and the cars had liquid fossil fueled internal combustion engines and they didn't drive themselves yet and a lot of people didn't know how to drive without breaking laws or crashing into things. And his guns fired unguided metal bullets! Using old fashioned gunpowder! And to help locate illegal drugs, he used an actual biological animal police dog!

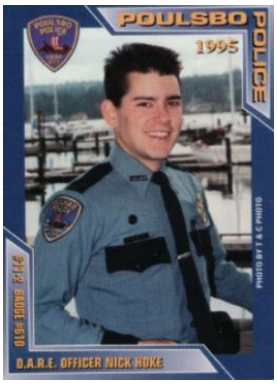


POLICE UNIFORMS & EQUIPMENT & GEAR & STUFF & RANDOM MUSINGS ABOUT PATROL WORK

Police uniforms, equipment, and technology all changed and advanced considerably during my career. I'll start with the clothing. My first crime fighting costume was a two-tone blue shirt and pressed slacks that I usually wore glossy artificial leather corfam-type dress shoes with instead of boots since I always thought the boots didn't really go well with the fancy pants. The dress shirt with collar insignia had a cool hidden zipper behind all the buttons; just one button at the top worked and the rest were fakes, because somebody at the shirt company had figured out the hidden zipper idea saved a lot of time and wear on the buttons. They were totally right about that. Whenever I did a show and tell for school kids or scout groups, I'd include showing off the nifty zipper-hidden-behind-the-buttons feature.







That uniform was professionally dry cleaned only, which was okay because at some point the police officers before me had their work contract written up to have the department pay for the cost of dry cleaning all of the officer's uniforms. We all had three or four complete uniforms so one would always be ready while another one or two was at the cleaners'. So..yeah, we all pretty much looked like security guards. But that was the standard look back then and most cops dressed like that. Below: a much younger me in '93 and '95, sporting that classic uniform look. We had police trading cards back then, used to curry favor and good will with mostly little kids. Yes yes I looked young; I was only in my mid 20's!







The era of formal patrolman police hats had almost come to an end at around that time. Most of the older officers I knew had a police hat issued to them, and some officers even wore them occasionally, when it was raining. I wasn't issued a hat but it was still required for the police academy graduation ceremony, so somebody loaned me their hat to use and wear..just once. Hats were being phased out of general daily use regionally and nationally for the most part and eventually it became common to see hundreds of bare-headed cops at big funerals for slain officers. But we still had ball caps issued, for bad weather. I was not a big fan of those either, though, so you won't find any pictures of me wearing one in uniform. I always gave my ball caps away to friends or family who coveted them, with the big "POLICE" lettering on them. I'm just not a hat guy.

I remember one day I came in to work wearing a black t-shirt under my Class A uniform instead of the usual white. I knew what I was doing, I was trying out a new look. The police chief stopped when he saw me that morning in the office: "Black t-shirt, huh?" He stared for a while. "That's a good look," he said and went on his way. The next day, guess who was wearing a black t-shirt instead of a white one from then on?

Oh look here's the complete 1995 line up of our trading cards. The first two rows were the regular full time paid officers, the bottom half were the unpaid volunteer reserve officers. The old timers in the top row: 20 years later two of them were dead from poor health and the other five had been forced to resign in various levels of disgrace and humiliation. For the other 3 rows, only six of them ended their police careers with a less-than-honorable discharge.



Okay back to uniforms. The patrol officers at the PPD were able to eventually convince the chief that we could save the city some money if he let us change to a more casual wash and wear polo type uniform shirt instead of the dress shirt and the dress pants that needed dry cleaning once a week. He readily agreed and so we switched over to a dark blue uniform that we could wash at home. Unfortunately it took us several years of frustration to conclude that we'd never match each other in dark blue because different shirt vendors had different ideas about what dark blue was. We learned there are a dozen different shades of dark blue – there is even a difference between "NYPD Blue" and "LAPD Blue" and so we eventually decided to stop trying to figure out the 50 shades of dark blue and just go to straight black instead. At that time we had to also redesign our shoulder patches from full color to a black and white scheme to match our uniforms. And because we were able to wash our own uniforms at home now, each officer needed really only two complete sets, which also saved the department some money. Nobody missed the old security-guard look.







When we wore slacks most of us had shiny black shoes instead of boots, and so when we went to the wash and wear shirts we got new pants, that had cargo pockets on the sides and everybody switched over to boots. The first few years were a mish mash of different styles and brands as we experimented with different vendors, but eventually we figured it out and settled on a permanent look. Not coincidentally, there was a national trend from uniform companies to offer more tactical clothes, and in time we wound up with functional tactical uniforms that looked pretty sharp and worked well for us. Every two years we could get the department to pay for new footwear. I started out with the shiny corfam type shoes, but eventually went to boots, and after a few years discovered the joy of side-zip boots that only had to be laced up once. Because why spend a minute or two every day lacing and unlacing boots when a zipper option is available?

Jackets: When I first started, the police jackets were plain solid color, and most were made with a kind of a shiny satin finish that looked like these things:



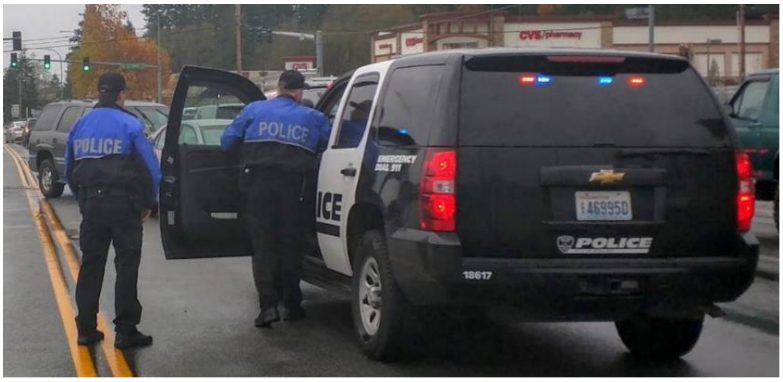


And yep, those are real fake fur collars. Because that was in style back then I guess. I found these on the internet by searching for sigh…"vintage police jackets"… I had one of these for only a few years and nobody ever took a picture of me wearing one. (I took the fake fur collar off before ever wearing it though) Back in those days we also had some officers wearing one-piece jumpsuits that were also made out of this same kind of shiny nylon material. It looked normal and fine back then, but in retrospect they were pretty, erm, cheesy looking.




In the late 1990's some creative police uniform designer person invented the two-tone blue over black jacket style, that even had POLICE in big letters on the back. That was actually a significant change, and in time, more and more uniform manufacturers started offering their own versions, and eventually those became very popular. We got ours custom made so they fit everybody nicely. They cost about $350 bucks each, and they came with a warm removable fleece liner inside. It was a considerable improvement over the old styles.





By the way, back in the 1990's (and before that) it was very uncommon to see "POLICE" emblazoned on the backs of uniform jackets or shirts. It just wasn't done back then. Nowadays its ubiquitous. Below: an emergency team effort in the garage to straighten out a patrol vehicle bumper that may or may not have been involved in a tiny little with a tree. Damage was fixed, so no paperwork was filed on what happened to the police car because as you can see, sarge, it's just fine.

Here's me modeling the polo shirt look, circa 2001 or so. I liked those shirts, except they had no pockets. But the pants by then had cargo pockets to make up for it; so that was cool. You'll see many more pictures of me, wearing all kinds of different uniforms over the next couple dozen pages. Some were better than others.



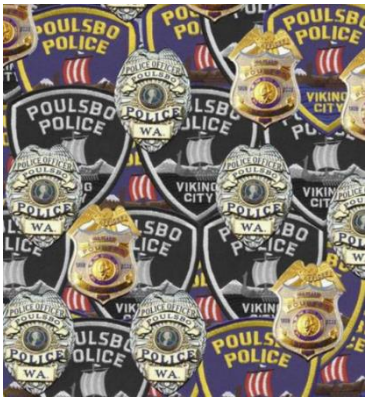


For formal occasions - like for court appearances - we had the fancy class A shirts, but no longer in the light blue scheme with contrasting darker pocket flap and epaulet colors; the new ones were all one color. It looked so sharp I wore one a lot on regular old patrol, complete with the real metal badge instead of the white embroidered cloth patch version.

Back then, police officers were not allowed to have tattoos. Well, tats that were visible, anyway. We had one reserve officer - an active duty navy man – who had a large tattoo on one of his calves. When he wore shorts on patrol during the summer, the Chief made him cover it up with a flesh colored bandage sleeve, which was honestly not a big improvement. This was back in the 90's. Fast forward 20 years into the future and nobody was bothered by visible tattoos anymore; by then we had several officers with large full-sleeve arm tattoos, and our latest Chief himself was sporting a large calf tat.

As our uniforms changed over the years, so did our shoulder patches and our badges. When we changed from the light blue shirts to black, the shoulder patches went from multi-colored to black and white. Here are both patches, and two different badge styles:





When I started my career, this is what I was first issued to carry on my duty belt:

1 pair of handcuffs

1 large canister of pepper spray to make people cry

1 expandable metal baton to club people with

1 very large and very heavy Smith and Wesson .45 caliber model 645 Semi-Auto handgun. Capacity was 8 rounds, +1 in the chamber.

2 extra ammo magazines; 8 more .45 cal bullets each

1 portable police radio with a collar mic with 5 channels, two knobs. (no display screen)

1 very large flashlight

And under my uniform shirt, one thick and kind of stiff Kevlar bullet resistant vest. Not bullet proof, but bullet resistant. Actually it could only stop handgun rounds – a rifle projectile would go right through it. The vest parts (a front and a back) were in a fabric carrier that had Velcro straps to hold it all together. I had several thick Kevlar "bulletproof" vests over the years. I didn't mind wearing them too much but sometimes during the summer one could get a little sweaty in them and every once in a while I'd get an itch on my back or somewhere under the vest that could be very, very difficult to get to. They also made everybody who wore one look several pounds fatter in the stomach area and they had an annoying tendency to ride up towards the neck while sitting. But the technology improved over the years and subsequent models of vests (replaced every 6 years or so) were almost always slightly thinner and more pliable and more comfortable than earlier models. I had a special pocket sewn into the front of my vest carrier to hold spare keys and a pocketknife, which I could easily reach just several inches below my front collar. Because I didn't like getting locked out of my patrol car. Also in a pants or shirt pocket I carried the requisite small paper notebook, and at least two pens.

Look close below and we see me sporting a drop holster on my leg, because that was the only place I had room for the new taser, circa 2006 or so. Behind my radio is large collapsible impact weapon (which doubled as a great place to hang my hinge cuffs) and behind that a new and improved small flashlight, that by today's standards is way too big.





When I became a K9 handler, I got to wear a special tactical jumpsuit. A lot of guys loved wearing their jumpsuits instead of the regular uniforms and when I got one I had to agree they were great. They were one piece, very durable, and were loaded with pockets everywhere. They were standard issue for K9 handlers because the fabric didn't collect dog hair all over them, and they didn't get as dirty as fast as the regular uniforms; especially good for the handlers who had patrol dogs that would regularly go track bad guy running through bushes and fields and woods. Those jumpsuits were also custom made and cost well over $400 dollars, but they held up for years. The pockets. I loved the pockets! I had two breast pockets that had zippers on the top and each had another side pocket in there behind them; so there were four there, and then two more on the seat, and two more on the front legs, and even a taser pouch on the left leg. I could easily carry lots of empty folded evidence collection bags, black nitrile disposable gloves, a notebook and pens two cell phones and a flashlight and spare keys in just the pockets. Then I took it up one level; two of the chest side pockets had come with zipper and Velcro closures; one each. I eventually concluded that neither was best, and I had a better idea. So with the help from a police clerk who knew how to sew, I replaced the Velcro side pocket closure with super strong magnets, sewn into the fabric. It was a great success; no more loud Velcro ripping; I could just shove my phone into the closed pocket to break the magnet seal, and then reach in and take it out, quietly and securely, with the magnets auto closing immediately afterward. I don't know why magnets aren't used more in clothing…?!?

Here's my duty belt in 2016, from left to right: one extra taser cartridge holder, police radio, taser, cuff case with hinge cuffs, pepper spray (positioned in center of back),cuff case with regular chain cuffs, expandable baton, handgun, and two extra gun mags with 15 high power duty rounds each.



Most officers had black leather gloves to wear on occasion for doing dirty work or for projecting a bad ass look when needed. We also had disposable latex gloves if something were particularly yucky. Back in my early days the gloves came in only medical grade blue, or green, or bluish green. Then somebody invented black colored nitrile disposable gloves, and that was a great day. I remember being so enthralled with the first box of those we got. Eventually all the disposable gloves we got were in black only; because only doctors or paramedics look good wearing blue disposable gloves, you know?

Now about my first gun; the big silver Smith and Wesson. It was heavy! 2.3 pounds!



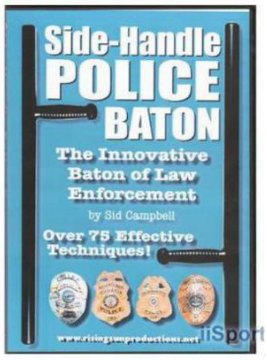
They were only made from '85 to '88 and if you want to see one in action, Don Johnson points his all over the place with his finger on the trigger (!) in seasons 3 and 4 of the popular "Miami Vice" tv show back from those days.







It was actually the first real handgun I'd ever handled and shot in my life. A few years later we switched over to Glock handguns, because those were lighter and much better. I don't care too much about guns really, so this is pretty much all you get about pew pew pew talk. Oh, but I'll mention that in my early patrol days some of the older officers were still carrying around older six-shot revolvers instead of semi-auto handguns, and most officers also still carried old side-handle wooden clubs that had to be put on and taken off every time they got in and out of their cars. By the way, I never hit anybody with my club. Most of my coworkers eventually stopped carrying their club batons altogether, because thumping on people was pretty old fashioned and Poulsbo was not like a big city that had bad people running around who needed to be clubbed all the time like baby seals.



As the years went by the old PR-24 side handle batons were replaced with collapsible/expandable batons, which were also never used. In fact, I can say that in my entire police career I never even saw an officer use a club in any way on an uncooperative client. However I always kept mine (small collapsible, not a giant side handled one) on my belt, figuring it would be better to have one and not need it instead of needing it and not having it. I had a found a section on my gunbelt where it fit nicely behind my gun without bothering me at all so I never felt a need to remove it. I actually did use mine on occasion to adjust the air vents on the passenger side of my patrol car. That was pretty much about it- I never even had to brandish mine at a potential customer.



Pepper spray was a relatively new invention back then; the older officers had originally been issued spray cans of chemical irritant "mace" which was essentially tear gas. Then somebody invented pepper spray, which had a greatly superior incapacitating power. I saw pepper spray used just a few times in my career; and I only used it once or twice myself.



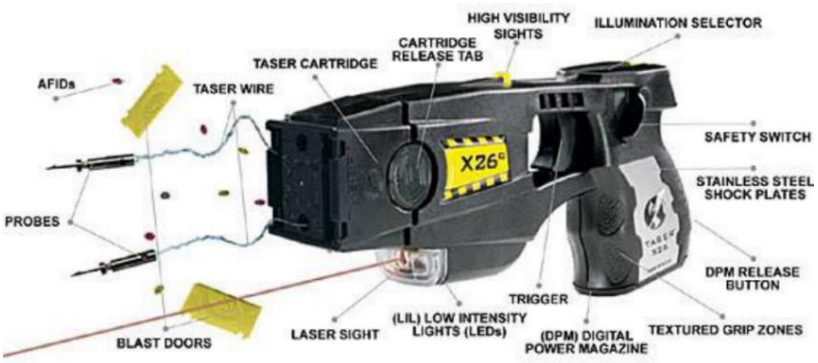
The first time I ever used my pepper spray was in my first year; I was trying to take a guy into custody outside his apartment. I remember his name was Gunnar. He didn't want to go to jail. He was actively resisting my attempts to cuff him. So I got tired of wresting around with him and I sprayed him with the pepper spray. And instantly realized why the directions said to "shake well before using" – the contents had settled in the can and only the propellant gas came out with any force. A little of the actual liquid spray did come out, but only weakly. It dribbled down my hand and arm and later stung a surprisingly strong amount. So I had to pause in the action, shake the can well, reapply as directed, and then it came out in a strong aerosolized spray that I got into Gunnar's face and that took the fight out of him. As for my arm, I had to rinse it really well and even then, a few hours later it was still stinging like the worst sunburn I ever had. So: pepper spray does work well, and I never went to work without it.

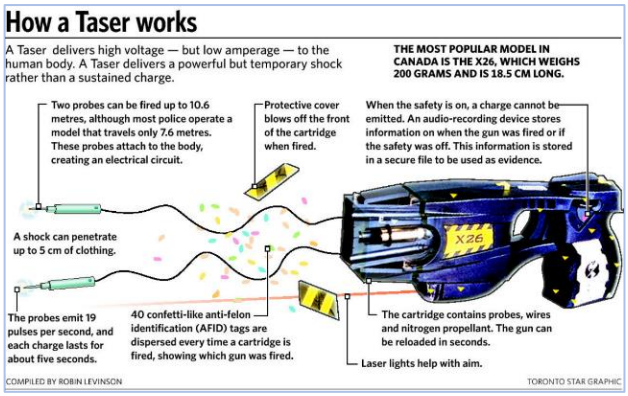
Around the year 2000 we got our first TASERs issued to us. A big clunky thing but super cool new technology. It ran on 8 regular old AA batteries that we had to take out and recharge regularly.





About ten years later we upgraded to a better X26 model that was smaller, packed a bigger punch, and didn't require double AA batteries because it came with its own proprietary long-lasting battery module. During the 10 years or so that I carried that model, the number of clients I zapped: Zero.





Those models were replaced later with the next generation model, the Taser X2 CEW. This new and improved bad boy had not one but TWO cartridges ready to go that each fired two barbed point dart probes, allowing the user to shoot one guy twice with 4 probes (if one of the first two missed) OR shoot two different clients. Bonus: if you zap two guys and one of them starts acting up again before the cuffs go on, you can zap him extra and not the other guy while the wires are still stuck in him. Yep, that's some advanced level shit right there.



Number of clients I had to zap with that fancy model: zero. Apparently my verbal commands were persuasive enough to gain compliance from unruly subjects without having to resort to tasering.

The Tasers were a very significant upgrade to our collection of tools of the trade, and they almost completely replaced the rare times when we had to pepper spray uncooperative customers.

Although my academy class in 1993 did not have to get sprayed with pepper spray (I don't know why or how we managed to escape that test) and because the taser hadn't been invented yet, we didn't get tasered either. But when the Poulsbo PD did decide to issue Tasers to the officers, it was required that everybody ride the lightning in a training session. So while I never officially got pepper sprayed, I did meet the occasional cloud of pepper spray mist that got caught in the wind during the rare police applications, and I can definitively state that I, personally, would much prefer to get hit with a taser anytime instead of getting peppery spray in the face. Because the thing with the electricity is that as soon as the juice is turned off, one can make virtually a complete and quick recovery. Of course the person zapped will have a pretty elevated heart rate from being shocked, but I saw a lot of demonstrations over the years and I was trained that it is possible to get zapped and jump back up onto one's feet pretty quickly and get over it. Unlike the pepper spray. That shit will sting and burn for hours and hours no matter how much rinsing in cold fresh water happens. In fact I have never, ever, heard of a cop anywhere who said they would prefer personally getting pepper sprayed instead of getting shocked. Basically, chemical irritants are the worst!

Our taser training was slightly scaled back; we did not get actually shot at with the barbed darts that would have pierced our skin; we got the slightly gentler method which was to have the darts removed and the metal probes taped onto exposed skin in two places on our body. Now if the two contacts are relatively close together, the pain and neuromuscular incapacitation is more localized. But if the two contact points are spread apart, say one on one leg and the other placed across the body on the arm on the other side, then there's a lot more area for the electricity to run through and create a circuit; especially if the path goes over one's spinal column. Which is what our instructors did. Everybody has their own unique reactions to getting shocked. I remember one female reserve officer went rigid and rose up on her tip toes (while two other officers held her arms to keep from tipping over or face planting) and she started yip yip yipping in a very high pitched cartoony voice.

When it was my turn and the power was turned on and I got shocked, my entire body tensed up as the current coursed through my body. It was a highly distracting and painful experience. As the taser crackled and transferred a lot of electrons into my flesh all I could do was -quite involuntarily- say "FUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUU…." And when it was over I was able to finish my word and then I felt really warm all over. Not cause I peed myself, I just felt warm. I immediately thought if I ever fell into the bay in the winter and needed to get warmed up, a taser application might fulfill the need nicely.

It was extremely painful but much better than getting pepper sprayed because like I said, once the power is off, the pain subsides very quickly. The pepper spray, once applied to bare skin or clothes or hair, does not dissipate. It stays there until it is thoroughly washed off. The good news is that most bad guys, when they get zapped with a taser, they are done. The fight leaves them and they choose to cooperate. Of course most of them get the metal probes shot into them and if they tried to get up and run or continue fighting, the barbs are connected pretty well and a second trigger pull would start another 5 second round of zapping. Which I can attest from personal experience can be about the longest 5 seconds of your life.



I saw an officer once get tasered in a training, with the goal of seeing if he could draw his gun out of his holster and return fire while getting tasered. (simulated gunfire, of course, using an empty training gun). Guess what. He was able to power through the zapping and while lying on the ground getting the shit shocked out of him, (and involuntarily hollering a lot) he was actually able to get his gun out, aim it at the guy holding the taser, AND pull the trigger several times. It impressed us all. Not that we ever planned to get in a situation where a bad guy might try to taser us, but at least we were able to see that it could be overcome, even while in the throes of it. (don't share this part with the bad guys!!)

I only used my taser once in my career to actually shock somebody. There were plenty of other times when all had to was pull the weapon out, turn it on, and put the laser dot on somebody's chest, or even just mention that I was about to consider that option. That all by itself worked great every time. The one time though that I had to taser a prisoner-to-be it actually it didn't work, mostly because the guy was a complete lunatic. It surprised me greatly because I hadn't had a backup plan ready at that moment. The lunatic actually shrugged off another tasering attempt from another officer at the same time, so we had to go hands-on to subdue him. I thought about that incident a lot after that, and realized that if one is going to go hands on with an uncooperative customer, one should always have a contingency plan B ready to be implemented within about one second, when and if plan A does not work. I'm reminded of that when I see a physical altercations of any kind on YouTube, for example. There are a lot of folks out there who get caught up in the moment and without thinking much, hit somebody or try to knock them down and they have absolutely no follow up or follow through with the next step. You see it especially when a woman runs up to a bully and hits him on the back or even jumps on his back. That's not enough to end a fight, you know? There has to be a pre-planned series of moves and maneuvers that come after that first strike. BTW, that lunatic who we eventually subdued and took to jail? He was a problem child in the jail for a few weeks. One of the jailers told me "I had to punch that guy straight on in his chest. I've never hit anybody that hard as I did that guy. I fucking punched him HARD!" The jailer looked at me and added "That fucker didn't even flinch."

On a related note, guess how many times in my career a citizen filed a complaint against me for excessive use of force. If you guess "none times" then you are correctamundo. Because I was not the kind of cop who thumped on people for no reason, thank you.

Now, on to handcuffs: I usually had two pair, just basic silver metal Peerless brand. One chain link, and one hinge cuff. Yes I needed two because sometimes I arrested two bad guys at once. In fact there were several times in my career when I needed 3 or 4 with me.







The hinge cuffs were more heavy duty, for the really bad bad guys. Once on, they could not be twisted freely. It was very easy then for an officer to grab the middle part and control a bad guy wearing them; a slight twist downward would put pressure and pain on both wrists, and so once a bad guy had those on, the officer pretty much owned him.

The cuffs were originally available in one color only; silver. Then somebody started inventing handcuffs in different colors! Blue, green, orange, black, and even pink. I knew some female officers who couldn't resist getting pink colored handcuffs. Any fleeting thought I ever had of getting my own pair of pink cuffs quickly evaporated the day I saw one of our reserve officers (he was not a female..) cuff a client with his pink cuffs. The suspect had overdosed on meth and was literally running around naked through people's yards. When the aid crew showed up to haul him away they stopped for a moment and stared at us, raising their eyebrows at the spectacle of the naked man proned on the grass with pink cuffs behind his back. "Hey those are NOT my cuffs!" I had to explain, while pointing to the reserve officer. "Those are HIS!"





For the last several years of my career, switched over to some nice black cuffs. They looked tactically bad ass. A little better than the silver.

Some of my coworkers bought their own lightweight cuffs made with new alloy metals in an attempt to lighten the load off their duty belts. You might think a couple of lighter handcuffs wouldn't make that much of a difference but the weight difference actually is pretty significant. But I was fine with my normal weight handcuffs.

Toward the end of my career, the protocol for the use of handcuffs (officially known as “Hand Restraints”) changed a bit; kind of for the better, and kind of for the worse. With the goal of minimizing injury, the officers were compelled to be a bit more gentle when handcuffing folks. Any prisoner who complained about wrist pain would not be dismissed anymore, but taken seriously. For most of my 27 years in uniform, slapping cuffs on people was done quickly and not without a bit of force. Double locking the cuffs to prevent further ratcheting/tightening was optional and if and when somebody complained the handcuffs hurt we had a long list of retorts like “Oh the cuffs are new and stiff – wear them for a bit to break them in,” or “Well your wrists would feel fine if you weren’t a criminal,” or “Sorry about that, they’re not really designed for comfort.” If, at the conclusion of a long drive and then booking into the jail, somebody had marks on their wrists from the handcuffs, we’d tell them too bad, and assure them the marks would go away sooner or later. That all evolved into the new standard of applying the cuffs carefully, make sure they were not too tight, double lock them, and if somebody complained about wrist pain, there would be photographs taken, any possible injury would be documented in a police report, and a supervisor would (have to be) notified. Integrated with all that were new de escalation techniques and crisis intervention protocols, to help keep customers (and officers) safer from violence.

Some of my coworkers were gadget freaks; they had to go out and buy (and carry) whatever new thing was out there for cops. Like a handcuff key with a built-in LED light and emergency glass-breaker point, or new lightweight high-strength handcuffs, or a clip that would hold a driver’s license at eye level on a patrol car steering wheel, or fancy rappelling-grade black leather gloves, or a spring assisted opening knife (very popular) or a flashlight that clips on the handgun, etc. Every police department has a least a couple officers like that. (No that was not me)

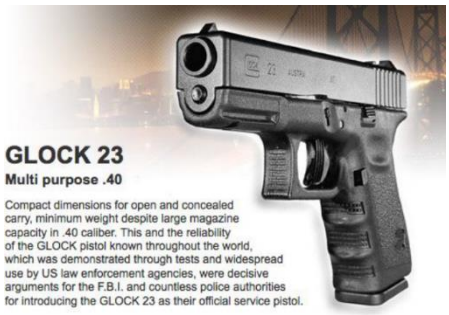
When we were issued our first electrical Tasers we stopped using the pepper spray as much, and our reliance on pepper spray declined so much that the pepper spray canisters became smaller and more compact; we didn’t need the big ones anymore. A lot of my coworkers even just stopped carrying some of the tools like the pepper spray and club but I always kept my duty belt full. I figured it would be better to have it and not need it than need it and not have it, like if I were in a fight and needed some extra options to subdue somebody. Now because my waist size was 28-30 the whole time I was a cop, there was virtually no empty space on my gunbelt. The bigger guys with bigger belts had more real estate and room for more gear and equipment, although usually they just kept that real estate empty. I heard from a lot of citizens over the years as they looked at my belt about how much stuff I had crammed on there and I always joked with them that maybe I should eat more donuts to get a bigger belt and have more room for my tools and gear.



The total extra weight of the gunbelt, gun, bullets, vest, boots, and everything else was a little over 20 pounds. A lot of my coworkers had back problems over the years because it was never really comfortable to sit in any chair or seat with all the stuff on the back of the belt but I somehow managed to go my whole career with no gunbelt-back issues. A lot of my coworkers preferred nylon duty gear to keep the weight down but I always liked the leather look and didn’t mind the little bit of extra weight of a leather belt.

Oh alright, I’ll go back to guns. The old Smith and Wesson .45 caliber cannon was pretty stupid heavy. It was a fine gun, but then an Austrian guy named Glock invented a much better gun (which is a fascinating story you should look up if you care anything about guns) and we switched over to the new Glocks, going for a .40 caliber model. Which is a like a 10mm round, if you’re into metric measurements. The Glock gun magazines held 15 rounds, which was pretty impressive and beat the hell out of the 8 .45 bullets in our old guns. So with one round carried in the chamber and with two extra loaded magazines, we went from carrying 25 .45 cal bullets to 46 (.40 cal) total. The .40 cal rounds had a little less oomph than the .45’s so they were a bit easier to control the recoil when firing, which meant better groupings on the targets. The Glocks were also smaller and considerably lighter, so even though they held more ammo they were easier to handle and carry.

I never wore a second hidden/backup gun, but I know some guys at other agencies who did. It was not really necessary for our small town, but if I worked in a more dangerous area or if I worked in more rural counties where assisting officers might be 20 or 30 minutes away then I might have been more tempted to consider stashing a second smaller gun in my vest or on an ankle holster. In fact, I was never really much of a “gun guy.” I had some coworkers who were complete gun nuts, with huge collections of rifles and handguns of all kinds; some of them owned literally dozens of firearms. Good for them, I guess. But not my thing at all. In fact, when I retired and turned in my two guns, that left me with a total of none guns left at my house. And not surprisingly perhaps, I also never carried a gun off duty.



But I did enjoy target practice, although my scores were just average, and I was okay with that. The way I saw it, if I could get all 50 bullets (in the quarterly testing) anywhere near the middle of the man-shaped target on the paper, then I was satisfied. Maybe they wouldn't all be dead center in a tiny little grouping, but I felt reasonably confident that if it were a real person I had to shoot at, I'd be able to drop him by the second or third shot at the most. I will say though that I was an excellent shot with my rifle - either with the scope or with the built-in sights- and I could put bullets all day in a very small circle downrange at a hundred yards, easily.

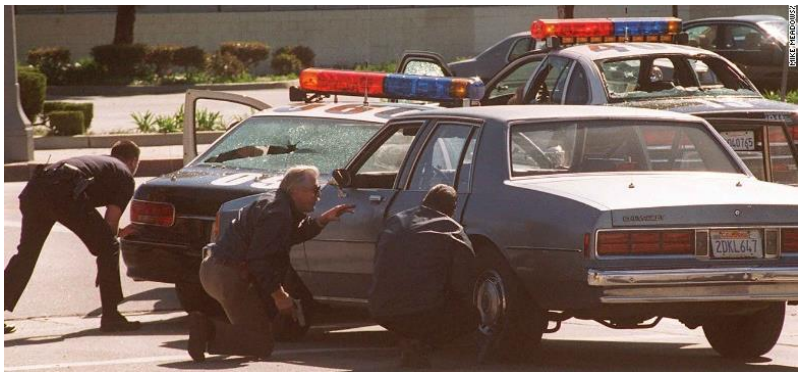




Now, on to the rifles: Before we upgraded to the modern assault rifles we had shotguns in our cars, like virtually every other police agency in the country at that time. While the shotguns were plenty intimidating they were not accurate at all past about 75 feet. Eventually police departments around the country realized that assault rifles were much better to use since there was a lot less liability for collateral damage and they were, well, a lot more accurate. Plus the rifles held a lot more ammo than the shotguns.

This was during the time when there was a general national trend among all police agencies toward law enforcement "militarization" – a term which probably has a negative connotation for a lot of folks. (but not for cops..) For some historical perspective here, in the 1970's there were literally only a few dozen actual SWAT teams in the country, and they were from the largest police departments only and they were used only for the occasional riot or hostage-taking gunman emergency situation. Their total number of raids were – combined across the country - only a few hundred per year. Then in the 1980's the "war on drugs" started ramping up with drug dealers, couriers, and drug lords arming themselves with bigger and military-grade weapons, which gave police departments good reasons and incentive to improve their own firepower and tactics to combat them. SWAT methods and techniques were developed and improved, conferences and training centers were started, and private businesses slowly created a whole industry for police equipment and gear and trainings for SWAT teams, or CERT teams, or SORT or SIRT or HRT or ERT or CNU or NET or TSU teams or whatever they wanted to call themselves.

But the biggest single event that really changed things was the North Hollywood shootout in 1997. That was the event where two heavily armed (and armored up with Kevlar body armor) bank robbers took on about 300 responding police officers; in less than hour more than 1,700 bullets were fired back and forth.





Within days, police agencies all over the country were realizing that their traditional shotguns and revolvers were going to be outdated by the better weapons that the bad guys were transitioning to. It was a great time to be selling Glock handguns and AR-15 assault rifles.

Police departments everywhere gradually evolved from practical to tactical; it became more common to see officers with helmets, riot shields, grenade launchers that fired all kinds of less than lethal rounds, and rifles. The terrorist attack in September of 2001 and subsequent wars in the middle east put the militarization of domestic police agencies into a permanent acceleration, complete with the transfer and utilization of a lot of nice surplus military armored vehicles. Which actually really upset a lot of peace loving citizens who decided they didn't like seeing their local police driving those things around. Or even having them on standby mode in the police parking lots.

Here's my local version of what we're talking about: This was the SWATmobile used by the county sheriff's deputies.



So to recap for you visual learners, police Special Weapons And Tactics units went from this in the '70's and '80's:





To this in the 1990's:





..to this:





Of course the Poulsbo Police Department never got one of those things. And we had only one bullet proof riot shield, which we hardly ever used.



Like I said, a lot of (ignorant) citizens were horrified at the "militarization" of police. Sure, a police sniper or two for larger departments would be a good idea, and maybe some tactical wheeled or tracked robots for taking care of bombs, but helmets on police officers! My heavens no! Assault rifles out in public? Oh dear! But slowly, general attitudes really started to change after September 11th 2001, when police departments everywhere had to take on new and increased security roles. After the initial shock of seeing helmeted cops holding large rifles at airports and large sporting events at stadiums, people gradually got used to the new look, especially after a couple more decades of really bad mass shooting in schools and malls. And stores and festivals. And concerts. And churches. And playgrounds.

In 2017 I got issued a new tactical load bearing vest to wear. I loved it. The funny thing about it was that I had been seeing them for a few years but never once even considered wearing one myself. Then one day one of my coworkers was trying out a demo model and said "Chief is going to order some of these for whichever officers may be interested.." and I went from casual observer to passionately coveting one. Within mere seconds. Yet another example in my life about how things (and attitudes and beliefs I have) can change very quickly.



Pretty cool, huh? I knew a couple cops who actually didn't like the look, they said it wasn't "officer friendly" in appearance. Well that's why God invented smiles; to look friendly when needed. What I really liked about the vest was that it projected a "don't mess with this cop" appearance to the bad guys. Because when bad guys attack cops, they always size them up first. A lot of cops get attacked when they look too friendly, or too soft, or too fat or too slow or too sloppy and then therefore presumably also don't have the skills to fend off a surprise attack. Conversely, a lot of cops DON'T get attacked when the bad guy decides the cop would be too hard to take down just because of the way the officer looks; his bearing may project the capability of speed, skill, strength and violence.

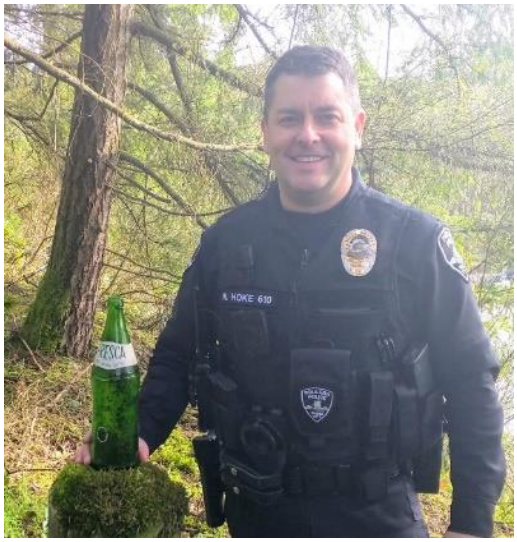
The militaristic appearance that the vest gave to the officers would have never passed public acceptance just a few years earlier in our small town, but by 2017 the citizens were used to seeing up-armored cops and in fact the vast majority of the public was glad we more tactical looking and prepared. Actually, by the time I started wearing this I discovered very few folks – be they firefighters, store clerks, or school teachers – even really noticed the new look, or cared that much.

The vest had a couple of main attractions; first and foremost it got a lot of equipment off of the duty belt. For officers with backs that tended to get sore or achy, it made a huge difference. It also created a lot of extra real estate to add some more gear; in my case that included an extra rifle magazine loaded with thirty .223 cartridges. Not that I needed 30 (additional to the 30 already in the rifle) bullets to kill a bad guy, but I would definitely like to have another 30 if I had to lay down a field of cover fire to keep a bad guy low if a rescue was needed. Which was indeed a police event that had happened recently in a city near mine, so no, I was not over reacting. I moved my Glock bullets up to the vest, and immediately realized that I could keep on the ones on the belt; they were not in the way at all. So this brought the grand total of my ammo count to 76 bullets for my pistol and 30 for the rifle. Actually the rifle already had a magazine with 30 in it, so the extra mag I carried on my vest gave me 60 total of the .223 rounds. Yeah, it might have been a much but I didn't mind the extra weight. I considered it a kind of daily resistance training.



Another other cool thing about the carrier vest was that the kevlar bullet proof vest fit directly into it. So instead of the vest being worn under our uniform shirts, it was built into the load bearing external vest carrier, on the outside of our uniform. This was a huge improvement because on really hot days, when a long report had to be typed at the office and I wasn't going out anywhere, I could unzip the vest in the front and easily take the whole thing off, including the thick kevlar vest inside. And this also put an end to the problem of getting the occasional impossible-to-reach random itch under the kevlar vest.

Altogether I was carrying well over 3 pounds' worth of just extra ammunition. After I got everything redistributed onto the vest (and added some more items) the total weight was 5 pounds for the gunbelt and 12 pounds' worth of tactical gear on the vast carrier.



2017 was the year a gunman in Las Vegas fired into a concert crowd from a hotel window, hitting over 500 people, causing a kind of a paradigm shift in law enforcement across the county. My police chief at the time started making plans for a mass casualty shooting event in our small town; he pointed out the rooftops downtown and asked us "What do we do if a sniper opened up fire on our largest crowd of the year, during the fireworks show?" And a little bit more innocence was lost as I realized I had never once even considered that possibility. So even though I carried probably way more ammo than I needed, I never apologized for it or regretted doing so.

Other stuff: One time during my career we got issued some personal protective gear, which was basically a giant one-use bio hazard suit complete with a full face mask and filter canisters. A federal grant had paid for a few hundred of them; I think every cop in the county got one. They were great for using if a tanker truck full of chemicals crashed on the highway and started leaking fumes and vapors everywhere. Which of course never happened. I never saw a cop wear one outside of training. We also got issued some fancy high-speed first aid kits, which were called "trauma kits" and cost like $300 bucks each because they had quick-clot bandages and tourniquets. The kit was in a tactical black nylon bag complete with straps and buckles to attach to a gunbelt, for those officers who had room to add the other end of the buckle to receive it. They were also funded with a government grant, and they would be very useful for a gunshot injury, or a mass-casualty incident, so they were welcome. A lot of cops I knew took the tourniquets out of their kits and carried them instead on their tactical vests to keep them handy.

Other gear I had included a pocket knife, which wasn't an official item when I first started. The sergeants back then all had a desk drawer or two full of seized contraband items that usually included knives and cigarette lighters that had been taken from bad guys, and if an officer wanted a knife and the sergeant was in a good mood, maybe he'd part with one of the old knives. But then the school district's assistant superintendent gave us all pocket knives after his son's life was saved by my coworkers one night. The story is that two PPD officers and sheriff's deputy were out in the back PD lot late one night, smoking a cigarette or two because at that time smoking had been banned indoors, so it was only outside smoking from then on. They were standing around just BS'ing in the dark when they heard a car engine running too hard at the nearest intersection. "I don't think he stopped at the stop sign there," Bru said. The engine roaring got louder and they saw the car, a small pickup truck, go flying south on Fjord Drive right past the PD. The driver was going close to double the speed limit and was still accelerating. "He's not gonna make that curve up ahead!" The three officers jumped in their cars to give chase in the dark. They didn't get far; only a few hundred feet past the PD they saw that the truck had indeed missed the shoreline curve and it sailed off an embankment down toward the beach. The embankment there was close to 30 feet high. The truck slammed into the beach and flipped over. Fortunately the tide was out so the driver, the assistant superintendent's 19 year old son, did not drown. But he was trapped in the mangled truck, upside down. The fact that he was severely drunk was not helping him either. The three officers looked down to the beach and realized they'd have to work their way down through some seriously thick blackberry bushes to get to the driver, who they presumed was injured badly. Officer Andy was the first down the embankment, and he made his way to the crashed truck. Which was at that point on fire. And the kid was still stuck inside. Although he was drunk, he was sobering up quickly and he was not happy about his situation. Andy tried to extricate him from the truck and saw that he'd have to cut the seatbelt apart to get the kid out. The good news is that Andy had a knife with him. The bad news is that the knife was a very small Swiss Army knife on his keyring; the main blade was less than two inches long and it was not very sharp. But with an engine fire spreading, there was incentive to hack at the seatbelt webbing as frantically as possible. He succeeded, just as the flames spread into the front seat area. Less than a minute later, the entire cab of the truck was engulfed in roaring flames. The kid was actually uninjured and grateful to have his life saved. When his father heard about the officer's little Swiss army knife, he bought every officer an official police pocket knife. So from then on we all carried those knives, although for the rest of my career there nobody had to use one to save a life like that. Eventually those knives did wear out and officers got their own knives. And knife manufacturers started making really cool tactical police knives, that had a built-in seatbelt cutting blade on one side, and on the end, a special point for smashing in a car window, if necessary.

As I type this, and reflect back on how much my uniform changed over the years, I realize that when I first started I had no clue at all that my look would change. If you had asked me back then, as a fresh-faced and innocent 25 year old peace officer, what I'd be wearing 25 years later on duty, I'm sure I would have looked puzzled and I'd answer simply 'Um..the same thing I'm wearing now?" Oh how times changed. I had no idea what was in store for me in the future!

Next: let's talk about police flashlights because why not. Actually, it's another good representative example of changes I lived though. Our first flashlights were big giant heavy things that required 4, 6, or even 8 large D cell batteries. The popular and preferred brand was "Maglite." To carry one on a belt required a large belt ring that the flashlight could slip into and just sort of dangle from. Of course it would be close to impossible to sit down with a flashlight like that hanging off one's belt, so it would be taken out when an officer got into a car, and put back in the ring when the officer got out; like the PR-24 side-handled long baton. Officers who worked nights would take their flashlights on and off probably a couple dozen times a least, every shift.



The Maglite batteries were single-use only and they needed to be replaced about once or twice a month, depending how much the flashlight was used at night. If an officer used the flashlight a lot, the batteries might only last two or three shifts. The flashlights were so big and heavy we were taught to use them as weapons. I never actually saw anybody get thumped with one but we did joke a lot about clients who needed but managed to avoid getting a "flashlight massage" on their scalp. Side note: I met an old Seattle cop once who told me about how the patrol officers there used to have a "beat and release" method of policing for certain kinds of problems, usually in dark alleys at night. That sort of thing was pretty much gone and over by the time I started wearing a badge.

Flashlight technology improved greatly over the years; we upgraded from the Maglights to Streamlight brand SL20 flashlights that we could recharge in our cars, which was really super cool. No more disposable D cells!



And then Streamlight invented a flashlight that was much smaller, but almost as bright as the big ones, called a "Stinger." Those gave us the ability to carry a flashlight on our belt at all times and not have to take if off every time just to sit down somewhere.



And then eventually came along flashlights with LED's instead of the old incandescent or halogen bulbs, which was a real game changer. (it was not uncommon for the halogen bulbs to burn out or even break after a couple years, requiring a replacement..) The new LED flashlights were much, much brighter, smaller and lighter and even cheaper. At some point virtually every officer I know just broke down and bought their own flashlight to use on duty; since the new ones were so much better than the department-issued old ones.



I wish I had kept a police supply catalog from when I first started in 1993. Because I noticed that as the years went by, the police catalogs we got delivered in the mail gradually got thicker and were filled with more interesting gear and equipment; the selection and quality of everything went up considerably. For example, in 1993 there were only about three different kinds of flashlights available, and only about 2 different kinds of black gloves. Nowadays it seems like any good police supply business offers two or three dozen different styles and brands of flashlights and gloves, at least. And there are a lot more different kinds and styles of boots available, too. And all kinds of jackets and coats and duty belt gear. I could go on and on. Seriously though- a 1993 police gear catalog would be super amusing.

POLICE RADIOS

Our portable radios also improved. The first ones we had were clunky heavy things, with big square ni-cad battery packs that clipped onto the bottoms. When I started out, the radios had I think all of about 6 channels, and there was not even any kind of a display screen. Just a couple of knobs on the top. See below for the technological progression:



This was a pretty good improvement over not having portable radios at all though; some the older cops would tell me about the old days when the only radio technology was for the cars only. When the officers got out of their cars they had no communication with other officers or the dispatch center. If they felt like they needed to keep an ear on the radio while they were out of the car, (like on a traffic stop) they would switch the car radio to the outside loudspeaker which was either on the front bumper or behind the front grill, so if they were 100 feet away from their car they'd be able to hear the dispatcher hollering for them. Of course so would anybody and everybody else. And if they had to get out of their car and go do something, they'd be out of contact with dispatch until they got back to their car and checked in.

After I had been a cop for a few years we got shoulder mics, which allowed us to clip the speaker and microphone unit thing either onto a shoulder epaulets or on the front of a shirt. This meant we could hear the radio better and even turn the volume down so only we could hear it and not the bad guys, and we could key the mic without having to extract the radio from its holster first. Then the police radio manufacturers started offering in-ear speakers and small clip-on microphones, like the secret service guys had. This gave us the ability to receive our communications with the dispatch center in complete and discrete privacy. That idea was born as many officers across the country would have their tactical sneaky cover blown by portable radios suddenly going off while trying to sneak up on a bad guy, typically at his door or under a window. Imagine getting called to a domestic violence fight at a house at night. You tactically and quietly approach the front door. You're listening to the couple inside yelling at each other and you're assessing the situation. Suddenly your portable radio, which for some reason has been turned up to full volume, suddenly blares out something like "CENCOM SIX PAUL TEN CODE FORTY FIVE!" and your element of surprise is ruined. Or even worse, you're talking to a bad guy and the dispatcher comes over the air and starts telling you how many warrants he has for his arrest. Sometimes the bad guys knew that already, other times it would be a surprise to them and when they heard it out loud, that would give them time to react and some of them would suddenly go into flight or fight mode. But with the in-ear speaker and the capability to receive all information just to our ears only, the bad guys wouldn't get a heads-up when we got new information about them.

And our car radios got upgraded over the years too, of course. Newer models had display screens, and always more menu options than I could ever even begin to try and understand, because I didn't work in a big metro area and cross jurisdictions that required switching over to different radio frequencies 3 or 4 times a shift so I never had to learn all that complicated stuff. The 80's and 90's car radio models looked like these:





Regrettably, I never took a picture of one when it was mounted in one of my old patrol cars. Too bad; it would have been hilarious now. In the Olde Timey days, the modules that controlled the lights and sirens looked like these things:





And yes, I had lots of personal experience with both of these exact models.

For the first third of my career, we were still using traditional "10-codes" to communicate in code over the police radio airwaves. In the previous couple decades, law enforcement officers and agencies nationwide had developed the codes which seemed like a good idea at the time – the theory was that it probably wasn't in the best public interest for citizens to hear gory details of horrible crimes on the police radios; it was much more innocuous to hear something like "code 18 at the drive in" which most people would have no clue of knowing what that actually meant. The system had a fatal flaw though – there was not one standard code enforced, and so a lot of police departments literally just made up their own. Most tried to match the bigger cities around them but there were major and minor variations depending on the region or state, and it was common for even neighboring departments to have pretty much completely different number systems. So it was difficult for officers who switched departments to learn the new codes and stop using the old ones. As an example, our department's "Code 3" meant "at the station" but a lot of other departments used "Code 3" to mean "turn on lights and sirens and drive fast." Which is pretty much the complete opposite of being at the station. So eventually all the departments and agencies across the country agreed that using codes was not working so well, especially when multiple agencies had to work together for big events or trainings or natural disasters. It would be fine, it was decided, to just use plain English words to describe what was going on. So the codes started going away and nobody missed them much, although we did keep a handful in use when referring to driver who might be drunk, (code 13) or had a history with drugs, (code 77) or was not right in the head. (code 28)

My municipal police department shared a specific channel/frequency with some other local departments. It was all coordinated by the county 911 dispatch center and they changed it around a couple times over the years to see which was better. Usually the other agencies on our channel were the ones closest to us, which made more sense than the original configuration of having all the little cities share one channel. We didn't mind listening to the chatter to and from Bainbridge Island, but we got really tired of hearing Port Orchard dispatches on our frequency, since Port Orchard was way in the south part of the county and we didn't work with them. Therefore, we didn't care at all what they were blathering on about on the radio. Eventually CenCom divided the county into south, central, and north, and the PPD was on the north channel with the two closest Indian tribal cops and the Bainbridge Island cops, which made much more logical sense. (The fire departments had their own separate channels to communicate on..)

Back in those days, our police radios were broadcast out on the open analog airwaves, which meant that any citizen with a radio scanner – a receiver-only unit – could listen in and follow what we were doing. This was of course a problem when a few of those citizens were bad guys keeping track of where we were and where we weren't. More than a few law-abiding citizens also had scanners in their homes; it allowed them to get a glimpse into our world and when they heard sirens or saw ambulances in their neighborhoods they'd be able to know who was having what kind of problem. Although since we were still using codes most people had to have a locally-produced photocopied reference sheet (usually made by a radio Shack employee) next to their scanner that described what all the code numbers actually meant and which departments were on which frequencies. On a side note, back in those days it was not an uncommon practice for officers to maybe, uh, "accidentally" break any police scanners they found in the possession of criminals who might be using them to get away with criminal activities.

Eventually we got our radio channels switched to better (and encoded) digital frequencies which put an end to the days of citizens listening in to our dispatches and communications, and once we started typing notes back and forth over our car computers, our verbal radio communications were reduced by about 90%, which made for boring and frustrating scanning for all the citizens at home who were trying to figure out what we were doing and what was going on.

POLICE CAMERAS & CELL PHONES

I have to break this down into two completely separate sections when I write about cameras: This first section here covers still photography; the other part is about uniform body video cameras, which is much more interesting. And completely unforeseen when I first started my career. Let's start part 1 here with my first officially issued patrol camera back in 1993: A small fixed-focus very cheap Kodak pocket instamatic camera that recorded on 110 format cartridge film. Absolutely nothing to get excited about. Cost $26 bucks. No zoom, and of course pretty poor resolution but it got the job done. Most of the time. If mediocre counts. And yep, it used actual photographic film cartridges that looked like these:





The department also had a couple old Polaroid instant photo cameras that we used to take pictures when we needed the pictures right away. But those prints cost about a dollar each. Of course for the very important crime scenes the detective had a couple of "real" SLR cameras that had interchangeable lenses and flash units. Those were in the common 35mm format.



Because the cameras required store-bought film and then the processing of the prints also cost money, the (non-polaroid) pictures were only developed if we knew for sure we'd need them for court or something. So most of the photos we took just languished undeveloped in a shoebox with notes rubber banded around the film canisters with the date and police incident report number labeling them; after a few years the clerks would sort through them and throw away the older ones, without anybody ever actually having the film developed.

In the late 1990's we got our first digital cameras, using a federal grant to pay for them since they were about $250 bucks each. They were Olympus C860-L brand cameras, the first generation of consumer digital cameras available. The cameras ate 4 AA batteries for power. The cameras came with proprietary memory cards that had a capacity of 32MB, which means they could hold about 30 pictures total. Because that's right, each photo was about 1.2 MB each. We had those cameras for 4 years before they were replaced with much better models.





Because digital camera technology advanced and improved a lot during those years, it quickly became too difficult to have a standard-issue camera for everybody. So when an officer's camera broke or wore out or a new officer got hired and needed a camera, they'd get a credit card to go to the local WalMart and buy whichever the best model was out at that time. Actually, not the best model, but a mid-range model.

In 2014 when we upgraded our department-issued 3rd gen clamshell flip phones for touchscreen smart phones, and when it was clear that cell phones took pictures as well as our cameras, the sergeants made us turn in all of our cameras and just go to using the phones exclusively. The digital cameras were surplused and most of us were fine with surrendering our cameras; it was one less thing to deal with. At that point our department had signed on with evidence.com and so we had an app for our new phones that allowed us to take pictures of evidence or crime scenes and have the pictures automatically sent in to our secure cloud storage, which was so easy and efficient that nobody ever missed the old cameras at all then anymore.

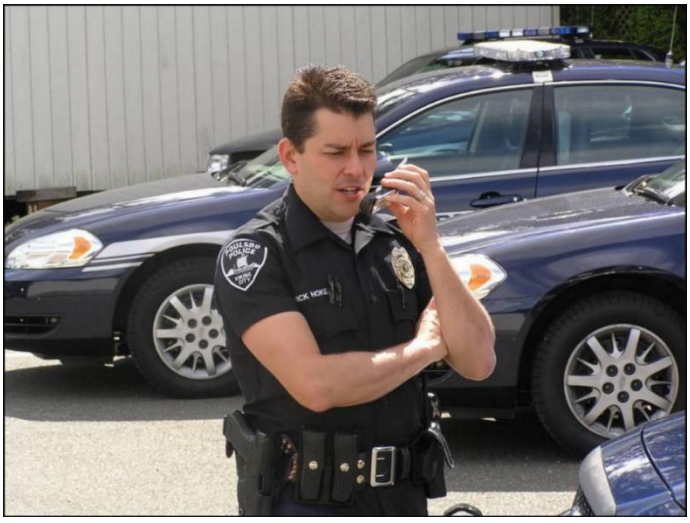
By the way, I think it was around the year 2002 when the first cell phone model was introduced that took photos. Which sounds so weird when I think about this, but seriously, back in the old days those first cell phones did not have cameras built in to them. In fact, for those first years when people started buying and using cell phones, nobody even thought "Hey you know what, the only thing missing on this thing is a …camera!" - Seriously, nobody even thought about that. And so when the first one was invented I was so fascinated I convinced my wife to let me spend $400 dollars to get one. The picture quality of the camera phone back then was a miserable 1 MB each, and the photos were stored (only) online at a Verizon account page, which was not so convenient. Because back then, there was no technology yet to send photos from phones to computers or other phones. But it was still pretty slick. At least for the first few months. How quaint is that?

So. Speaking of cell phones… it was in the late 1990's when cell phones were starting to become popular and our department got a couple. The first ones were ridiculous huge things; the batteries were bigger than the phones and required a small luggage bag to carry them both around in, so they were commonly called "bag phones."



The next few models were hard wired into the sergeant's cars to avoid the battery issue, and then much smaller pocket sized phones were introduced and most of the officers bought one for themselves. Back in those days they were paid for by the minute; usually around .25 or .30 cents but we qualified for "government/municipal" rates which dropped it down to I think around .15 cents per minute.

It took a few years for the Chief to break down and realize that he was going to have start budgeting to get a cell phone for each officer. Until that happened, we all used our own new personal cell phones to make work calls. Which of course caused some grumblings because we were paying for it ourselves. But it beat the old days, when we were out driving around on patrol, and when the dispatchers called us on our radios and told us that a citizen needed had called 911 and they needed a phone call from one of us. Which meant we'd have to drive back to the station and use a phone there to call them. Because we didn't have cell phones with us! This also reminds me that in the days before cell phones and the internet, when an officer off duty wanted to see if he could maybe start his shift a few hours later, or take a day off, he'd have to call the desk phone at the police station and hope somebody was there to answer it, because that was the only way to talk to the officers on duty then.



Those first phones we had issued were clamshell type "dumb" flip phones that were good for phone calls and literally nothing else. No texting, no camera, no internet…just making and taking phone calls. In fact, the display screen for those phones had only one or two lines for the phone number, and that's all.

It was around 2006 that we got our first in-car video cameras for some of the crown Victoria patrol cars. The recording units fit into the area in dashboard where the am/fm radios were; the stock radios were removed and the camera unit was installed. The actual camera itself was mounted up on the windshield by the mirror. The big stupid thing was huge, as you can see in these generic photos I found on the innernets. It required a ridiculous amount of wiring, which took our city mechanic several hours each to wire them all in. As the years went by we installed more cameras in our cars. They got better; eventually the camera and everything were built into a housing the size and shape of a very large center rearview mirror; they in fact replaced our stock mirrors. (some of the early camera systems had the recoding drive stashed in the trunk because it too big to fit anywhere else) The newer models even had an external microphone about the size of a deck of cards, which of course needed to be put in a dock to recharge every other day or so. The microphone was worn on our belts or uniforms, and recorded the audio from when we got out to do traffic stops.

The cameras would record only what they were aimed at directly in front of our cars. So they we good for documenting traffic stops, and not much else. They had terrible user interfaces with stupid buttons instead of touch screens and each unit cost brand new a ridiculous $5,000 dollars. Plus several hundred more for the labor to install them. In 2014 we had them all finally removed out of our cars, at a cost of about $200 dollars each because the mechanic salvaged all the cords and plugs and wiring harnesses intact, for resale. Each unit – camera, wires, and everything -was then sold at auction for, well, about $200 bucks each. So..yeah…it would have cheaper just to literally rip them all out and just throw them away.



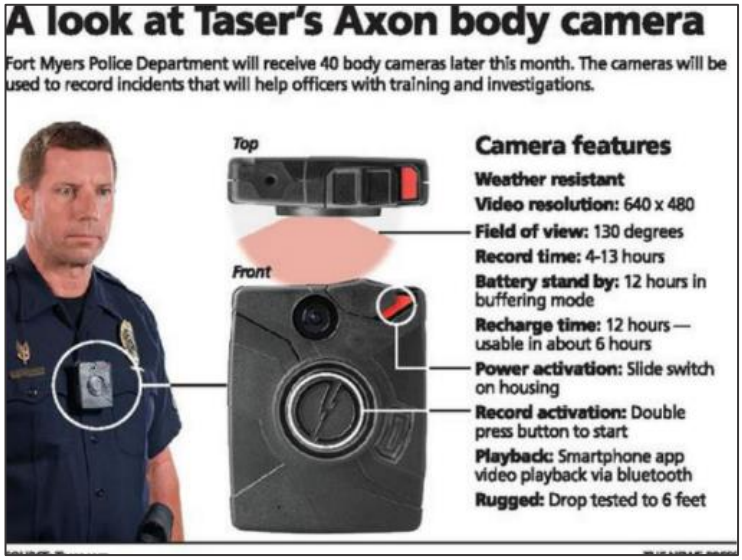
Eventually we replaced all of our car cameras with bodycams. Which captured exactly zero traffic violations, because they were all worn on our chests which gave them no view at all out our front window.

BODY CAMS

The good, the bad, and ugly…welcome to the wonderful world of uniform body cameras!

Pros: Relatively inexpensive to buy. Easy to use. Can exonerate an officer's actions.

Cons: Requires a lot of expensive data storage. Can implicate an officer's actions.



Actually the official list of pros and cons is much, much longer. Cameras can record a lot of things that officers might (or might not) see and just as importantly to note, they don't record a lot of things that the officers might (or might not) see. As you can imagine, this raises all sort of considerations and consequences when, say, a police shooting is recorded and the camera recording causes more questions than answers.

The body cams cost about a tenth what the dash cams cost, and because they were built specifically for police officers, they were rugged and simple to use. We tried out quite a few different models before finally settling on the Axon model, made by Taser International.

I'd like to pause for a moment and try to impress upon you that this was another great example of a technological advance that came about during my career that I had not anticipated or even imagined, when I first started. I mean, I had never, ever imagined that somebody I'd have a wearable video camera on my chest that would record things in color and in high quality. Really. I never even imagined it. I don't think anybody back then imagined it. Crazy, huh?

There were lots growing pains when we first started; complications and adjustments that needed to be implemented, including new policies and procedures. Because we were one of the first departments in our region to try these things out, standard protocols had not been invented yet and a lot of problems and challenges we were going to face hadn't even been imagined yet.

We attracted a fair amount of media attention from the large Seattle news stations, and that included the Seattle branch of Al Jazeera; which wound up doing a video segment presentation about our program that went national. I drew the short straw and wound up with the reporter and camera crew for a half a day, recording me as I drove around and pulled people over. I saved that video segment they did; it was like 10 minutes long. It's in my vault somewhere. I also had my photo posted in an article on the subject in a print issue of "Law and Order", a national police publication favored by police administrators.

Wearing a video camera forced me – and just about every other cop I knew who also had to wear one – to modify our behaviors a little bit on occasion. The two biggest changes for me; I had to become more patient with difficult clients, and I had to swear less at them. In the "old days" before the cameras, if I had to take somebody into custody and they were passively resisting, I could go hands-on with them and either gain compliance quickly.

The cameras required a fair amount of data entry for each and every digital recording, because they were all uploaded to Evidence.com (Owned by Taser) and kept secure. We were of course charged for storage, so it was beneficial for our department to label as many videos as we could as "for information only" and have them deleted after 90 days. Serious cases like misdemeanors and felonies we had to keep for a few years, and really serious felonies or car crash investigations were saved for essentially forever. With a dozen officers recording sometimes a few videos each per day, the costs add up.







After us, the Seattle Police Department then started issuing body cams to their officers, and as time went on more and more police departments in the region also started recording their police events. One of the consequences of all this was one guy living in his parent's basement figured he could maybe get rich by capitalizing on this. He started submitting public records requests for the recordings of the videos. Not specific ones, but all he could get. Because law enforcement agencies are publicly funded, the recordings were just like police reports; they could be (and had to be) subject to public disclosure. So this one guy would collect literally hundreds of hours' or recordings, and he'd upload them all en masse to YouTube. He never had the time to watch them all, he just put them out there and waited to see if any of them went viral if they captured a cop beating or tasering somebody. With enough views on youtube, he could make some coin. So his motive was strictly selfish; he was not trying to expose bad cops or challenge policies or promote reform; he just wanted to get money from posting videos that might get popular.

When he came after us we discovered that these public disclosure requests were quite problematic; every video released had to be previewed first by a supervisor, to ensure the video being released to the public is cleared first. If several officers recorded a response to a domestic violence call, for example, some of the people in the video might need their faces blurred out before it can be released. Or if names are mentioned and it is a sensitive case that should not be made public, some audio might need to be bleeped over. So watching and redacting video clips suddenly became very time and labor intensive. And since only the supervisors had authority to review all the videos, it took them away from the other things they had to be doing. And the poor sergeants had to watch the video and listen to the audio very closely, because it would be bad if two officers mentioned a different case or names or other information that had nothing to do at all with the actual recording.

It got so problematic that the police chiefs and camera manufacturers lobbied the state lawmakers to change some laws. It eventually worked; in Washington state the laws were amended so that random citizens could only ask for certain police reports instead of just "anything and everything" recorded. That took time, though. So our Chief had to meet with the guy who wanted every recording ever made from us and tried to negotiate something. During one of their meetings the guy mentioned that a lot of videos were getting uploaded but then rejected by YouTube for copyright violations; apparently when an officer did a traffic stop, if his car's FM radio was playing any music that the bodycam recorded, YouTube would block the whole video. So as soon as we realized that, some officers (ahem) started to be sure to turn on the FM radio in our cars for even just a few seconds of our recordings; the more popular the song, the quicker YouTube would be able to recognize it and deny posting and keep our traffic stops off YouTube.

Other growing pains included developing rules and protocols about when the cameras should be activated and when they should be turned off. We learned the hard way – by getting excoriated in the press – that when an officer turns off a camera to have a private conversation with another officer in the middle of an investigation, it can look really bad. Axon/Taser saw that too and added "mute" button on their next generation of bodycams, so the video recording could continue uninterrupted but with the sensitive audio not recorded.

As more and more cops started wearing body cameras across the country, and as more and more citizens started recording the police using their own cell phones, a disturbing new trend developed; that of the "Questionable Police Shooting." There were numerous examples that made national news, and for more than a few years police officers as a general whole sustained a lot of criticism from vocal critics including activist groups and citizens everywhere. See: "Black Lives Matter"

Cops shooting people for no good (legal) reason had of course been going on for a very long time, but now it was starting to become really public and widespread. I can't defend the indefensible or excuse the inexcusable actions of bad cops, but it made policing a lot harder for most officers because we were getting a LOT of flak from the media and from upset citizens for the actions of bad cops in completely different parts of the country.

Now whenever I met an old retired cop, one who had worked the streets in the late 60's and 70's, I had a deep respect for them. Those guys, especially the ones who worked in bigger cities, really worked for their money. A lot of them had to deal with racial inequality and unrest and riots and high levels of mistrust from the public. And I used to think I had it easy compared to them. But around 2015 or so, it was not really a great popular thing to be a cop in this country. And one of the ways I can prove that is that nationwide, the number of people who wanted to join police departments dropped considerably; literally just less and less men and women wanted to become cops. And we all knew why; that was no secret. The downsides and cons (the danger, the shift work, the rules and regulations) really outweighed a lot of the positive aspects.(See also "Ferguson, MO.")



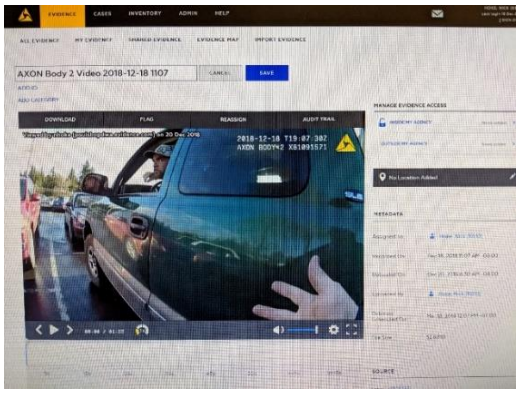
Anyway, back to the body cameras: I concluded that any department or agency that issues cameras to all their officers or deputies is going to have to deal with the consequences of the inevitable bad recording getting made public. Sooner or later, something will get recorded that at the least is either embarrassing to the officer or the agency, or at the worst will show an officer violating the hell out of somebody's civil rights, which will make the department liable for monetary damages. For those reasons, a lot of police departments wanted nothing to do with cameras on officers and avoided or resisted that advancement for as long as possible.

My attitude, like most of my coworkers, was that the cameras were really helpful about 10 percent of the time, rather inconvenient 89 percent of the time, and really, really unwanted about 1% of the time. A lot of citizens think cops wearing cameras is a fabulous idea. But then readily admit no way in hell would they themselves want be in a job where everything important they did was recorded.

The written policy for the use of cameras evolved (and grew in volume) over the years. Where it had been common practice to turn off the cameras halfway through an event so the officers could discuss strategy with each other, we then had to keep them recording non-stop so there wouldn't be a suspicious or problematic break in the recording. This led to a new common phrase among the officers, especially when a latecomer arrived on the scene: "Is your camera on or off?" which eventually got shortened into the quickly understood "You on?" or "You off?" And even the firefighters who worked with us on the street learned to ask "you on?" or "you off?" so they knew whether they could talk freely with us or not.

The cameras were great for DUI cases; that was undisputed. It's one thing for an officer to try to explain to a jury how drunk looking a suspect was; but when there is a video recording showing the drunk driver stumbling and fumbling and slurring their words and acting like an ass..well that is pure gold. So the number of DUI cases we had that went to trial dropped to almost zero. No defense attorney would ever, ever, want a jury to see their clients drunk like that. Before the cameras, it was not uncommon for an officer to have to go to court and explain to a jury EXACTLY how the field sobriety tests were administered; officers would have to reenact their part in court, with the jurors, judge, prosecutor and defense lawyers watching. And of course the defense attorneys were looking for anything that deviated from anything written in the report, so they could try to catch the officer in a discrepancy that might be suggestive of malice. Some officers would have to spend an hour or two on the stand, answering questions. The video recordings changed all that and made prosecuting drunk drivers a lot easier.

The cameras made us restrain ourselves more. Obviously we had to swear less at bad guys, and be more judicious when administering force to gain compliance. Which is another difference between cops in the old days – before I got into policing – and what the profession evolved into. If I could generalize, which is generally dangerous and wanton to do but I'll do it anyway, I'll suggest that cops back in the 20th century were generally less patient and a bit more aggressive. An uncooperative drunk would be much more likely to get thumped on for failing to obey a simple command, for example. Or when a cop pulled over a maybe drunk driver and found out it was an off duty firefighter or cop from another agency, that officer would be more inclined to quietly take that driver out of their car and give them a ride home with no tickets or paperwork or reports. But now...it's all on camera and that gives officers much less discretion about how much or how little enforcement action (or force) is going to be inflicted, for better or for worse.



Another aspect of recording police scenes was that for better or worse, conversations were recorded verbatim. Now before the video cameras were issued, I could kind of paraphrase what suspects said, in my police reports. Soon after I got my camera though, I realized that I would have to get the order of events perfect, so my reports matched the videos. Meaning, first the guy said that, and THEN he said that other thing, and then it was after that other part that he then said the other statement. Yes, I know you all think this is a great and perfect system. but the reality is, it takes a LOT of time to go back and watch and re-watch videos to transcribe them exactly. In that respect, the cameras made a lot more work for us.

Also it's a sure thing that each camera user will, at least once, forget to turn off their camera and record things afterward that could be at best completely irrelevant and at worse quite embarrassing. Like talking on the phone to somebody else, or going to the bathroom..

And like I said, for any law enforcement agency that starts using body cams, if you get enough cops recording enough things, at some point somebody will absolutely record something on video that will be Not Good for the General Public to See.

And of course the officers could not delete their videos in part or in whole. No way. Literally impossible. I could keep rambling on and on about uniform bodycams but I'll spare you all and stop now.

POLICE TRAINING

Lets go way back to 1993: Just a few days after signing the paperwork to become a full-time city employee and Police Officer, I had to start thinking in earnest about what was coming my way. I had some mild fears and concerns, like would I be able to read license plates at a distance? In the dark? How long will it take me to learn how to decipher what the hell the dispatchers were saying on the radio? Will be it hard to learn where all the streets and roads are? What will it be like to wade into a rowdy crowd of drunks and break up a bar fight? Would the police training be too difficult? Fortunately, eventually all of those became non-issues for me.



My official police training started at the state academy in Burien, WA near the SeaTac airport. Officially, the place was called the Washington State Criminal Justice Training Commission, otherwise known as the WSCJTC. My Basic Law Enforcement Academy class in the spring of 1993 was formed up as class #403. (When I retired 27 years later the BLEA classes were in the 800's!) The classes were five days a week with weekends off. During the week the student officers stayed in dorm-type rooms. The instructors were mostly cops on loan from different agencies; some of them were great, some mediocre. We learned about patrol tactics and procedures, firearms, federal and state laws, etc. The total course was only 12 weeks long and did not include a lot of important topics that were added in the years to follow; the last time I checked the course now was up to about 19 weeks long, which sounds about right. Change is constant there; new courses are added, better training is implemented, and depending on who is in charge of the whole place at one any one given time, the new recruits are either trained as police officer "Guardians" or "Warriors". To the relief or consternation of police chiefs and sheriffs across the state who send their new officers there.

After my initial training at the CJTC I went to a lot more courses and classes over the years; some were just an hour or two, some were a day long, and some were a week long. Some were at the academy but most were at other police departments hosting the trainings, and some were at hotel conference rooms or other civic or government buildings in other counties or states.

Every single training course I ever attended always had one thing in common; none of the police officers attending ever wanted to sit in the front of the class. The seats would fill in from the back first, and unless the class was totally full the first couple rows of seats would always remain empty. Every instructor and officer expected it and the instructors would always make jokes about it. Only a few ever insisted that everybody move up to the front.

It was also not uncommon for most police instructors to half-apologize in advance for swearing during their presentations or give a disclaimer or warning: "Oh I should warn you all that I tend to swear a lot when I'm doing police work, and that includes classroom instruction. So, if you have a problem with me swearing," (short pause here for dramatic effect) "then you are in the wrong fucking line of work and most definitely in the wrong fucking classroom. So fucking deal with it, because I'm going to be doing some swearing." These types of announcements were always met with general laughter and I never heard or saw anybody wrinkle their nose and complain at any point about the instructor's profanity. We were all cops, after all. Needless to say, some of the presentations sometimes included graphically violent and horrible pictures or videos of crime scenes and victims, too.

In the first half of my career I went to a fair number of training conferences and classes. One of my first ones was a two week DARE Instructor course where about 20 officers from across the state were selected to be DARE Officers. The very first exercise, at the start of the first day, was each officer had to go to the front of the class and deliver an engaging energetic monologue about a certain subject for five minutes. The subject topics were written on cards and each officer got their card when they stood there in front of the class. So of course there was absolutely no chance to prepare, it was all improvisational. The subjects were very vague like "Big Toe" or "Sky" or "Front Door." Officers talking had to stay on topic and no questions from the audience was allowed. The idea was to see which officers could be comfortable with extemporaneous speaking in front of people in uncomfortable situations. I did okay. Not everybody passed. A few guys did really well and impressed the instructions. (The DARE course was also a bit entertaining because we had several Canadian police officer students in attendance. They lived up to their reputation of being hilarious because every single night at dinner in different restaurants one of them secretly told the waiters and waitresses that one of them was having a birthday. They pointed out this one same guy every time. So every night he had the wait staff surprise him with a happy birthday moment that usually included surrounding him singing and clapping and presenting him with a candle-lit desert.)

Another class I went to once was a two-day Public Information Officer course, where a newscaster anchorman guy from some big Midwest news TV station taught classrooms full of cops how to issue press releases and give on-camera interviews. Although I had always wanted to be a PIO, the class was originally scheduled for my sergeant who had a schedule conflict at the last minute so instead of forfeiting the course fee I was picked to go. On the last day of that training the class was divided into small groups and given scenarios to discuss at a simulated press conference. The officers in my group were a bunch of fast thinkers because when it came time to appoint a spokesman they all pointed at me and sent me up to the podium, where I had to explain to the class how my imaginary police department was handing a case of a police officer who had chased a bank robber in a high speed pursuit and wound up killing some innocent bystanders in a crash, and so of course the audience members, pretending to be news reporters, had a deluge of criticism and a lot of hard questions.



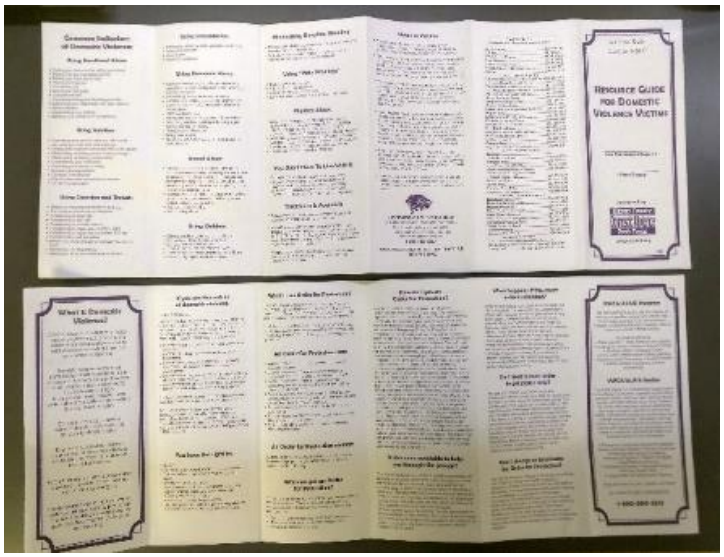
Sometime after that I decided that I actually did not ever want to be a PIO; while it would have been exciting to sometimes be on TV explaining some big police bust or something, I realized that department spokespersons also have to explain and defend all the stupid policies that their bosses insist upon keeping. Over the years I saw more than a few PIO's take a lot of heat publicly for just being the messenger and the more I thought about it the less I liked it. It's kind of like how they describe the White House press secretary as the hardest job in Washington D.C. – it's not fun being in a position to try to make bad things look good on the orders of your boss when it's obvious to everyone in the world that you're blowing smoke.



Another time I got to attend a week long Dept. of Justice funded training in upstate New York about youth safety, with a large group of officers from all over the country. I don't have any stories about that one but I was close enough to drive to Niagara falls once, which was pretty miserably foggy that day. And my rental car, a silver Chevy Malibu, had only 3 miles on the odometer when I got it.

Other trainings included annual updates from the county prosecutors who would tell us about new state and federal case laws that changed our standard operating procedures, and we had tactical first aid courses, and sometimes tactical maneuver trainings involving paint marker gun rounds with mock scenarios involving bad guys on simulated traffic stops, taser update courses, first aid and CPR, crime prevention, records management, standardized field sobriety test training, defensive tactics, how to deal with mentally ill clients, state and national database access trainings, WSP breath alcohol machine updates, and there was the occasional sexual harassment trainings for all city employees. Memorable for the one year when it was presented by a woman from King County who used to be the county risk management supervisor who had to write the checks for all their claims and payouts, so she knew what she was talking about. Unfortunately the message was kind of lost that year because she was wearing a distractingly tight sweater that made sustained concentration for all the men in the audience virtually impossible. And created discussion amongst ourselves during the breaks that would have greatly disappointed her, since we clearly were applying nothing she had been trying to present to us.

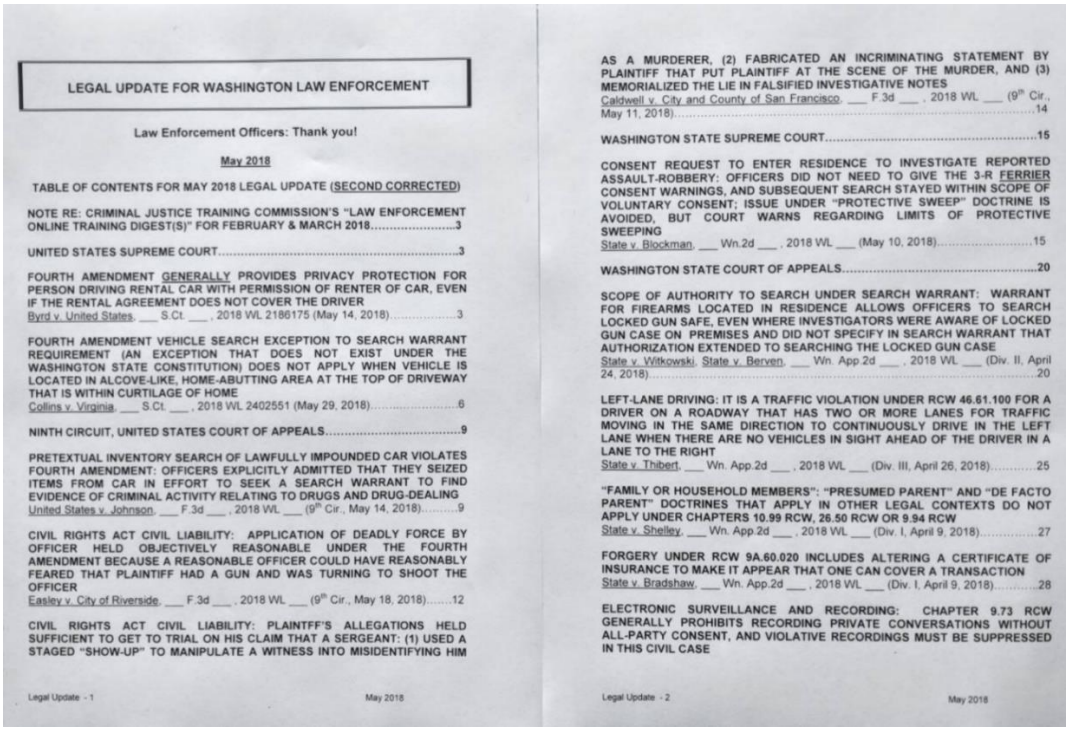
In the mid 1990's I got involved with the local domestic violence task force organization and I became familiar with DV issues. The state had made a new law that all police officers had to give an official brochure to all DV victims, explaining their rights and the new DV laws, and offer phone numbers for local resources. We didn't have one so I created a comprehensive multi-page educational resource brochure that met all the requirements. In short order it was adopted for official use by all of the police agencies in the county and over the years that followed literally tens of thousands of them were printed up at a large print shop in Bremerton and they were standard issue to all of the officers and deputies. Advocacy groups spread them out to doctor's offices, waiting rooms, and some women's restrooms. The last time I saw one of those brochures, 20 years on, it was a bit shorter version than my original but I could still recognize most of the format and writing as my original layout. I guess that thing would make one of my top ten career highlights.



I also went to a few trainings held by the Washington Traffic Safety Commission, usually in Bellevue or Seattle. Those were two day events and they paid for hotel lodging for one night. They included a hired camera crew to record the officers (looking sharp in our uniforms) making video public service announcements that were aired in our local respective communities; it was always about the Importance of Wearing Your Damn Seatbelts. Sadly, none of those videos were saved by me.

I also attended many trainings held at other police departments around the region; some were in Eastern Washington, which was a nice change of pace but necessitated a long drive.

I also went to boating safety conferences, and did some bicycle patrol trainings, and trainings for DARE and SRO duties. For legal updates, we had access to monthly documents like this thing below.



LEGAL UPDATE FOR WASHINGTON LAW ENFORCEMENT

Law Enforcement Officers: Thank you!

May 2018

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FIREARMS TRAINING

And we practiced shooting at a firearms range several times a year. Unfortunately our range looked nothing like the nice, well lit, climate-controlled and dry shooting galleries you see on TV or in the movies. Ours was outdoors, deep in the woods way out past Bremerton about a half hour away from Poulsbo. It was at the end of a long winding dirt road secured with a big metal locking gate. The drive along the dirt road included some large metal signs on the trees, reminding us in big bold red lettering of the basic rules of firearms: "Always keep your firearm pointed in a safe direction!" and "Treat all firearms as if they were loaded!" and "Keep your trigger finger outside the trigger guard and off of the trigger until you are ready to fire!" and "Be certain of your target, your line of fire, and what lies beyond your target!"

We practiced shooting three or four times a year. There was a pistol range and a rifle range with spray painted lines on the gravel to mark off standard shooting distances like 10 yards, 15 yards, 25, etc. We had some old mats to put on the dirt when we practiced shooting while prone with our rifles or kneeling with our handguns but most of the time we practiced standing up, sometimes out in the open and other times using moveable plywood barricade stands to simulate walls we could use as cover and concealment.

We never cancelled range dates due to inclement weather, and there was a lot of inclement weather in the Pacific Northwest. We shot a lot in cold drenching rain and freezing drizzly wet snow. Once a year we had a "night shoot" when we practiced shooting in the dark, using our flashlights. The easiest way to schedule everybody to shoot in shifts in the dark was to pick one of the shortest daylight days of the year, which meant we always shot in the dark in…December, when it was of course miserably cold and usually wet with rain or snow. On the rare shooting days when it was not actually cold, or wet, or drizzling raining in the fog, or even snowing but was instead actually warm and sunny we'd joke about not being used to shooting in "unusual weather conditions."





One time when I went to the gun range there were about 100 US Marines from the submarine base security detachment finishing up there; I guess their own range was out of service that day. They had their semi-auto rifles and woodland green camouflage BDU's and face paint and it looked like quite an imposing scene, until I got closer and noticed that the average age of them all was only about 19 at which point I felt much, much less intimidated by all of them.

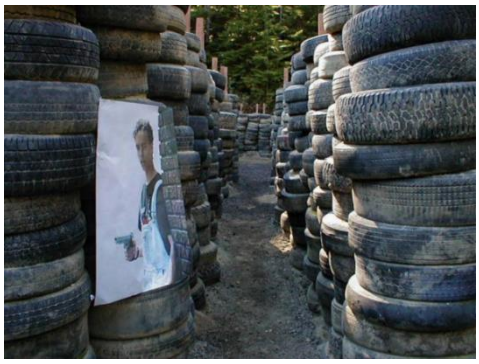




When I first started my career there was an old tire house at the range, which essentially a large (and roofless) tire maze which had been specifically constructed to simulate shooting scenarios indoors. It was basically a bunch of walls and rooms and corridors made by stacking tires flat on each other up about 9 feet high.

The tires were all centered on posts set in the ground and then filled with dirt but for some reason the whole thing started to collapse here and there over the years and it became too labor intensive to keep up so it was eventually abandoned. Plus despite the fact the tires were rubber, there were metal bands in most of the tires that had the disconcerting tendency to ricochet bullets around once in a great while. But it was fun while it lasted; we would go into the tire house and shoot bad guys (posters or mannequins) hiding inside around blind corners and rooms. We had some human-sized 3D foam targets we'd set up and they could hold different things in their hands, like foam cell phones or foam handguns or knives. It was considered bad form to shoot the ones holding phones.





Most of my coworkers were really into guns and they had small or large collections of personal pistols and rifles. Sometimes they'd bring a personal gun or two to the range, usually when they got a new one. Most were regular handguns, or subcompact off-duty carry pistols, but occasionally an Israeli .223 bullpup or long rifle or some other exotic thing would make an appearance.







We also shared the range with several other police agencies, but they all went on different days then we did. Unfortunately we never got to shoot at any fun targets; just about every time it was just large sheets of paper targets; either black silhouettes or circles with grids. Sometimes if we were lucky there'd be old bowling alley pins or balloons or metal plates. But never anything really fun like melons or glass bottles or televisions. Actually the best shooting was at the occasional small metal targets because they made nice plinking sounds when the rounds hit, so even if we couldn't see the bullets hit, we could hear and instantly know if we were on target or not.





One time I brought my favorite wife with me – it was actually her first time ever handling a gun. She used both my handgun and rifle and she enjoyed the experience.



In 2015 we added a couple new toys to our armory; single shot 40mm launchers that could shoot large rubber or hard foam bullets to deserving bad guys. They could also shoot chemical irritant rounds, useful for flushing out bad guys from houses or cars or boats or anything they had barricaded themselves in. I never actually saw a launcher get used for reals against a bad guy; my exposure to them was limited to just a few training sessions. But damn those things were super fun to shoot. A lot like using a homemade potato cannon to lob potato chunks several hundred feet; but these things fired much more straight and accurate. They were part of our arsenal of "less lethal" weapons. Originally and traditionally called "non-lethal" across the country, but more that few folks were killed when a round hit them square in the throat or temple or heart and they died, so everybody was forced to adopt the "less than lethal" or "less lethal" terminology. Here is the launcher, and some other random firepower we had in stock:



Yup, that's a Heckler Koch MP5 there.

One of my most memorable police training courses was a weeklong class about interview and interrogation techniques, taught by active-duty Seattle FBI agents. One of them came into class late one day and explained he'd been up literally all night trying to get a guy to confess to some major crime. What made the class interesting was the main technique they'd use to get people to confess. I'll share it with you here, the really short version. It can work not just on criminal suspects but on friends and family members should the need arise. We'll imagine a scenario where you are a business manager and you suspect one of your employees is stealing money. You decide to confront and interview your employee. First thing is, you should not use words like "steal" or "thief" but instead soften it up to "take" or "borrow." You start with an interview to gather some background information and develop some intelligence, and then you transition to an interrogation if you need to. You tell your thieving employee that you know they "took" some money. (Even if you don't know for sure you always make them think you know more than you really do.) You tell them that you know they are a nice honest person and you know that they were most certainly going to return the money next week. You tell them that you're just not sure about exactly why and that's why you need to talk to them. You then offer them a face-saving excuse for why, and also offer another excuse, that happens to be very unpalatable and harsher than the first excuse. It could sound like this: "Listen Sheila,, we know you had to borrow some money from the cash fund and we know you feel bad about this and want to make it right. I'm just wondering if you had to take the money to pay for some bills that were getting out of control, or if you're spending it all recklessly at the casino?"

When played correctly and when the conditions are right, it can work beautifully and I managed to get confessions using that technique quite a few times. My success rate was far from perfect, but it did work more often than not. Interesting to note that it doesn't matter if the suspect fesses up to a suggested motive that is not the actual reason. For example, a lot of times the real reason for the crime may actually be the worst case scenario, like the suspect truly is being selfish and stole the car just to be a jerk. But if they want to confess to stealing the car so they could deliver food to the homeless shelter, that's okay too because in the end it is still a confession. Maybe later in court when the sentence is handed down, the motive will be considered, but for the most part, for most petty misdemeanor crimes, the defense attorneys, prosecutors, and judges don't have the time or mental energy to care what exactly each criminal was thinking when it happened; the penalties imposed usually just boils down to "What kind of prior convictions are on this persons' record?"

Even the worst crimes can be minimized and a softer option can be offered to elicit a confession. If a guy is caught with child porn and is reluctant to admit he intentionally downloaded it all, the tactic could be like "Listen Joe, it's not that big of a deal. You're just looking at pictures. You didn't even take any of them. It's not like you had the kids there in person, it's just pictures! You were curious, huh? It's okay to be curious. Or Joe – and I hate to think this – maybe you're more than curious and actually all these pictures were taken in your house?" Again, the goal would be to get Joe to say something like "I never touched any little kids, I just looked at pictures!" and BAM! there's the confession. Of course though you have to make sure the bad guy really isn't doing the worse thing, because if he is then you get a confession for that. "Hey Joe it's not like you were killing little kids in a dungeon, you were just taking pictures of them right? Not to hurt them right? Just taking pictures? Or did you want to hurt them? You didn't want to hurt little kids did you? No, you were just taking pictures, right?" If necessary, this monologue could be repeated using different words as long as necessary. Even if the suspect is quiet, at some point they may break down and mentally decide to accept the better alternative. The FBI agents told us sometimes in really big cases they'd spent 5 to 7 hours or more in one sided non-stop conversations before the bad guy would finally confess; they'd throw out all kinds of different excuses and motives and eventually, if the guy didn't invoke his right to an attorney and wanted to actually put up the interrogation, he'd accept one of the excuses offered to him. They also said they'd interview child molesters and minimize it to the suspects by saying "Well at least you're not a terrorist!" and then when they'd interview actual terrorists they say "Hey at least you're not a child molester!"

There was merit in the philosophy of not giving a suspect an opportunity to deny outright participation in a crime. A lot of interrogators would never ask any form of "Did you do it?" because it is generally a suspect's first inclination to blurt out a "NO!" and once somebody starts denying something, getting them to reverse their statement can be pretty hard. So I never asked simple yes or no questions. I would always ask things like "Hey I'll bet that was pretty scary when the cops started chasing you, huh? I'm sure meeting the cops was the last thing you wanted right then. Listen, I just have a question – did you plan that whole thing out in advance or was it more like a spur of the moment opportunity that you just impulsively acted on? I'm guessing you didn't think about it beforehand. Like it just happened even before you knew what you were doing, huh? Or did you mean to do that? No, you didn't plan any of that ahead; you're not like a career criminal bad guy, are you?. Boy I'll bet some part of you must have regretted doing that, huh?" And as soon as the bad guy nods his head in agreement at some point, then the confession is well underway.

I adopted this to all kinds of questioning, like at traffic accidents when interviewing the person who had clearly caused the crash. Instead of asking "Were you driving distracted?" and given them an easy opportunity to say "No," I'd instead say "So…were you distracted by something inside your car, or outside your car?"

Other random things I remember from police trainings:

Another time we had an active shooter response team training at an empty high school, during summer break. Several different departments sent all their officers and deputies to that one. Traditionally, it had been standard operating procedure for patrol officers to set up containment and wait for a SWAT team to go in and confront a loose gunman in a school shooting event, but as the years went by and there were more school shootings, on a national level everybody everywhere began to realize that waiting any length of time for a SWAT team to show up and deploy was ridiculous. So then patrol officers were taught to wait just long enough to get a small team formed, and then they'd quickly go into the school and end the active shooter situation. The method we were taught then was to team up with the first 3 other officers that arrived – from any jurisdiction – and we'd group up very close together into a tactical diamond formation; one officer points a gun straight ahead, two guys behind him and to the sides cover the right and left, and one guy in back faces backward, and then the group goes into the school and hunts down the gunman and clears the school hallways and classrooms. I was able to master the technique enough though to figure out where to start out during the practice runs; after the first couple run throughs I saw which guy wound up in front at the last corner when the actor playing a gunman would be confronted, so after that I always started out in the lead, so by the time we got to the final scene I'd have already rotated myself to the covering the rear. Not because I was a coward, but because there was just a lot of pressure on the front shooter at that final moment, since all the instructors were watching nearby at then. This

method looks great on paper but it needed a lot of coordination and training to do in practice, because going around a corner - like in a hallway – requires a bit of leapfrogging in place, with the entire squad rotating positions. Because you can't have the guy in front stay in front going around corners, for some reason; the rotating of positions was necessary to make sure all angles were tactically covered. Once a team gets it figured out it's impressive to watch, but the whole afternoon we practiced this I kept thinking "okay there is no way anybody is going to remember these dance moves if there is an actual shooting going on...we're just going to run in and not bother all this tactical fancy rotating around corners nonsense.." We only did that training once. Within a year or two our protocol evolved into an even more simple "Active shooter in the school? First officer on scene should just run in immediately and end it."

It was not uncommon for officers to get injured at some of the trainings; the school for How to Learn How To Ride a Police Motorcycle was notoriously difficult and virtually guaranteed at least some bruises because dumping the training bikes onto the asphalt was pretty much a requirement. And there were all kinds of defensive tactics classes that took their share of casualties – some officers were sent home on crutches after just a few days.

I was at a conference once and there was a special presentation about some efforts of a new national program to get the number of police officers dying each year to under 100. It was a pretty ambitious goal because a lot of cops get shot by bad guys and there's no way to really prevent bad guys from doing deadly ambushes and shootouts, but a lot of cops were dying from very preventable causes, like speeding too much and not wearing their seatbelts, or not wearing their Kevlar vest body armor, or missing obvious warning signs when a bad guy is getting ready to attack. So a couple cops were doing a national tour, speaking to cop groups about how to not die and they ended with a 10 minute video, as told from the viewpoint of a dead cop's daughter. It was the most heart wrenching thing, I had tears streaming down my face by the end. Just about all of the other cops were pretty stoic and had blank faces but I couldn't help myself. The video ended and all was quiet until I blurted out "I'm not crying! My eyes are sweating!"

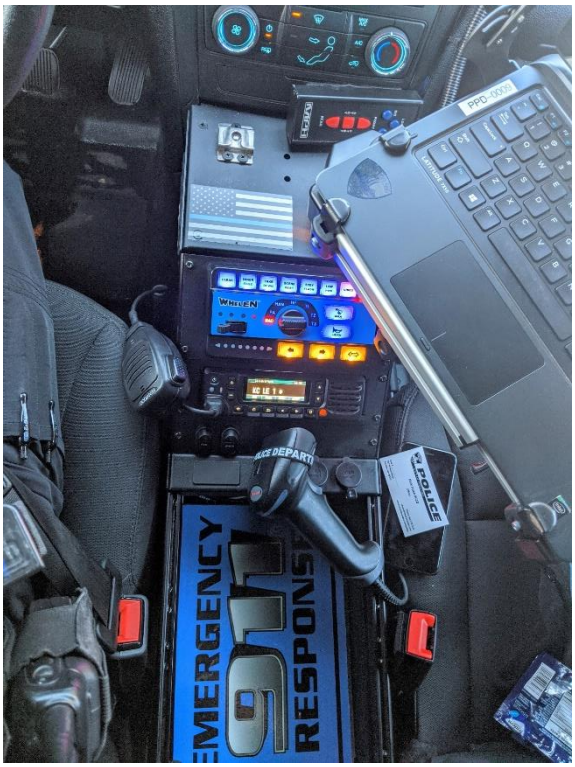


TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCEMENTS

As with everything else, the internet changed policing quite a bit, as you might imagine. As the years went on we got more and more new ways of replacing old techniques with better software and programs. It started in the late 1990's and has continued non-stop since then, and being connected with and to computers and clouds and servers and the internet had become very integrated into this line of work.

And most police agencies eventually switched over to websites like www.publicsafetytesting.com that provided new recruits for hiring, instead of the old fashioned testing and hiring process. For example, when I got hired in '93, the city had to print up about a couple hundred application packets that were about 10 pages long. The original had been created on a typewriter and then reproduced on a photocopier. Then the city clerk's personnel department had to coordinate a physical fitness test for a couple hundred applicants (the ones who successfully filled out their applications correctly) and then they had to administer a written test in a classroom for the next phase. All of that is now handled by independent companies that test and qualify applicants themselves, and then offer those names to interested police agencies.

Interweb connectivity allowed us get in on a county-wide police report database program, which turned out to be pretty useful; every name ever typed into it was there forever, meaning name and address and date of birth and phone numbers etc. only had to be entered in once. Here's an incomplete list of things that came into existence during the time that I was a cop.



-Door keys were replaced with RFID keycards.

-Online secure cloud storage for evidence photos.

-Online access to DOL photos.

-License Plate Reader cameras came into use.

-New and improved alcohol breath testing equipment.

-3D laser mapping systems for car crash scenes.

-Online access to drivers records .

-Online access to jail inmate phone recordings.

-Online access to department policy manual and employee handbooks.

-Online access to time sheets and work schedules.

-Electronic fingerprinting, instead of using paper and ink pads.

-Electronic Home Monitoring -ankle bracelets - became a thing.

-Pawnshop databases, allowing police to look up and track stolen/pawned items.

-Registered Sex Offender mapping for citizens to look up who is in their neighborhoods

-Online crime mapping for citizens to look up what's going on in their communities.

-Computerized database for inventory of the property and evidence room, complete with barcodes.

-Surplussed city items (old equipment etc) now available online for anybody to buy.

-Handheld laser barcode scanners in patrol cars to scan drivers licenses and DOL vehicle registration papers.

-Laser Detection and Ranging speed measuring devices (LIDAR) to supplement/replace radar speed measuring devices.

-Many databases (both government and private) for detectives to look up people.

-Video arraignments for prisoners in custody; making it easy for judges to talk to prisoners in different parts of the county.

-Computer aided dispatch with mobile computer displays in the patrol cars.

-Digital traffic ticket software, typed into patrol car computers and printed out on thermal ink paper.

-Online crime reporting for citizens to file minor police reports without calling 911 for an officer response

And of course due to high security issues mandated by state and federal bureaus of governmental inefficiency, each one of the programs required their own different logins and passwords and most of the passwords had to be reset annually – or quarterly – and yes those passwords required numbers and letters and special characters and had to be at least 8 characters long and old passwords could never be used again and some of them even refused to let us use our badge numbers in there anywhere, just to be extra godamn difficult.

As a consequence, very few officers used every single program or database available to them. I'd also like to add that I never, not once, used a police-related database or report-writing program that was anywhere close to perfect. They all had their flaws; some much worse than others. I don't think any were created by real, experienced patrol officers, and most of them had shitty GUI's.

A typical big police report might require up to a half dozen (or more) different programs to complete. Because none of them were connected to each other. There would be one system for the main report, another for the evidence database, another one for the bodycam recordings, another program to access previous DMV driver abstracts, another program to issue a ticket, and another program to access the 911-dispatch notes. If a tow truck impounded a vehicle or a traffic collision report was needed, that was another program. If there was a Use of Force that needed to be documented, that was another form. And DUI reports, domestic violence reports, and traffic collisions had their very own special forms.

Believe it or not, there is no national or state standards for most of the software programs used by law enforcement. So there are hundreds of different programs and standards used by thousands of different agencies and departments in this country. Maybe someday the best systems will rise to the top and everything will be interconnected and data entry will become much easier for future cops.

When I first started my career back in 1993, my department had two computer terminals used to type our police reports and that was it. Everything else was old-school analog, like traffic tickets that were written by hand in triplicate forms. ("Press hard you're making copies") Our computers and printers looked like this:





That printer: what it lacked in speed, it made up for in noise. Go to YouTube and look up "dot matrix printer" to get a full appreciation. For better or worse, that first computer system was a casualty of Y2K; we lost our entire database in the transition to a new program.



POLICE VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

In the mid 1990's our department decided to start a citizen volunteer program and I was put in charge of it. This was because I was also the crime prevention officer specialist which included neighborhood watch organizations and things like that. By the way, we never really had any effective neighborhood watches because there were never enough residents in one place who cared enough to take on the whole thing. It requires a group of motivated neighbors, one of them being a "captain" who makes lists and maps and figures out who lives in which houses and what their phone numbers are. I went to a lot of meetings to set up neighborhood watch programs, but when people found out that the police department's involvement was limited to basically just setting up one meeting and all the work after that was on them, well, nobody ever stepped up. I remember one meeting was called to order after a resident's house was burglarized and enough alarm was raised to gather some of her neighbors into a meeting at the fire station conference room. Where we heard the victimized woman describe how she came home to missing jewelry and missing money and artwork, and even one of her pillowcases was stolen. "Was it a big pink frilly pillowcase?" asked one of the neighbors. The victim said "Yeah! How do you know?!?" The other neighbor explained "Oh I saw some weird guy walking out of your house that day, it looked like he was carrying a large pink pillowcase stuff full of things. Boy did that sure look weird.."

So when our department decided to start a citizen volunteer program, I was the natural selection to the leader/coordinator/manager. The whole idea had come from a local resident who had been a member of a volunteer program somewhere in California; when he moved to Poulsbo he suggested our PD should try out a similar idea. So we did. Originally designed as a senior citizen program, we recruited (only) older, retired people.



I developed and wrote a policy and procedures manual from scratch. I interviewed all of the applicants and hired the best ones. I was in charge of that program for almost ten years, managed our monthly meetings, and I had to recruit and hire a lot of replacements for the older ones who died. I went to a lot of funerals over the years as they died off from old age, cancer, and in one unfortunate instance, a rare and freakish fatal case of flesh-eating bacteria.





The volunteers patrolled around in old repurposed patrol cars, in 4 hour shifts during the day. They checked on houses when residents went on vacation and wanted somebody to keep an eye on their place for a week or two, and the volunteers got a limited police commission that gave them enough authority to write parking tickets. They helped direct traffic and block roads and watch crosswalks during our big annual community events that included blocking off downtown front street for a few hours every Halloween night so several hundred little kids and their parents could go door to door at all the business there. The volunteers could also be used to help direct traffic around large car crash scenes or detours for other kinds of road closures.

After we stopped doing the DARE program we repurposed my stupid old DARE van to senior citizen duty. They loved it and used it for several years.





Whenever a better old vehicle was available, the volunteers got upgraded. So they had a variety of rides over the years.





A lot of the volunteers had military experience, and more than a few had been in combat in the Second World War and some had participated in the later wars in Korea and Vietnam. Some of them told me what that had been like.

Maury Johnson had been a tail gunner on heavy bombers that flew over Germany in large formations, dropping bombs on military targets. George Farnsworth was in the army and got assigned to a tank division in Alaska but never saw combat. He said under certain icy conditions the tanks would disconcertedly slide downhill on the mountains a lot.







Ted Babinski spent the war working with Ronald Reagan making training films.





Don Williams had been on a small escort aircraft carrier halfway between Japan and Australia when Japanese carrier-based torpedo planes found his ship and attacked it. His carrier sank and Don spent three days floating in the ocean losing shipmates around him to sharks before being found and rescued to continue the war on other ships.







Phil Campbell joined the Navy after the First World War and served on destroyers in an era before radios were even installed on navy ships; back then all ship-to-ship communication was with signal flags or semaphore lights. He then saw combat action in the Second World War, mostly around Japanese held islands in the Pacific.



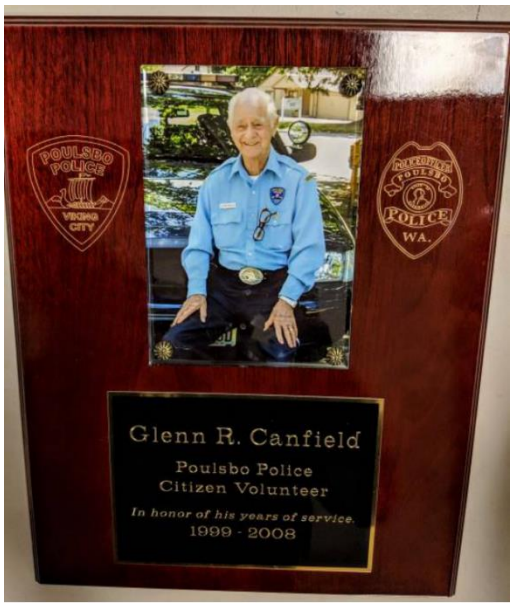
Bill Ridley was a commander in the submarine service; he had worked with Admiral Rickover, who was arguably one of the most interesting military leaders in this country's history. Easily in the top 5. Look him up. Very interesting. Really.

Walt McKercher was a retired electrical engineer. He seemed completely humorless at the interview but when he mentioned he had some experience as a birthday party clown (back when being a clown wasn't super creepy) I changed my mind and let him join.

Robert Johnson was a younger volunteer who had been in combat in Vietnam. He said he still had some PTSD issues and loud noises tended to make him flinch but I didn't let that disqualify him from being hired.

Sam Molnar was a career navy diver, a really nice guy. He was the one who died from the flesh eating bacterial infection that killed him in just a few days; he was still in our program when that happened. Went from healthy to sick to dead very quickly.

Glenn Canfield was on a navy destroyer in the Pacific that got attacked by Japanese dive bombers. One skilled pilot managed to drop a bomb pretty much straight down the smokestack. The bomb exploded down in the engine room killing a lot of sailors. Glenn was down there but a bulkhead saved him from injury, aside from the concussive shock wave and noise which damaged his hearing. Glenn told me another time a nearby battleship was shelling an enemy island in the South Pacific; an errant round missed the island completely and bounced over the waves before blowing a hole in a US warship behind the island. The only injury was to a sailor who was sitting down; the projectile exploded into shrapnel that went under his chair, destroying the chair legs and dropping him to the deck with no injuries.



Charles Fletcher was an army soldier in the 50's and 60's, specializing in explosives and demolitions. He retired with all of his fingers intact, and divulged that one of his special assignments was training and certification to be ready to carry and deploy with a couple other soldiers a small tactical nuclear weapon that weighed around 70 pounds and was carried in a special big round green canvas backpack.

There was another gentleman, I regrettably forgot his name but I remember when he told about the time when he was living as a young man in Denmark (he was Danish, yes) when Hitler's Nazi army blasted through and took over the whole country. In one day. He and his family then fled to Norway, but the Germans then took over that country too.

Bruce Davis was a retired school principal and his Carolyn was also a volunteer; she had been the personal assistant to one of the Mayors of Mexico City, which if you know your geography, is a highly populated city.

Ben and Sally Bukowski were California transplants. They met each other when Ben's first wife had an affair with Sally's first husband. So Ben met Sally and after commiserating they decided to hook up with each other. Which probably made big family thanksgiving events interesting.







There was Ralph Robie was a retired Navy Captain, and Helen Pendergraft, who was completely deaf. I didn't have a problem hiring a deaf person; as long as she had a partner who was alert it shouldn't be a problem, and it turns out it never was, because they always patrolled in pairs.

Kent Lord's wife was on the city council; and he was an affable retired airline pilot.

Gil Ulibarri had retired from the California Department of Corrections as a prison guard. He spent most of his career at San Quentin and he had stories about some of their famous inmates on death row, including Charles Manson.



Frank DeLapp had been a young Marine on personal Admiral guard duty aboard the battleship USS Tennessee one December morning in Hawaii in 1941 when waves of Japanese bombers came in from five different directions and initiated America's involvement in the war with death and explosions. Frank tried to shoot down some enemy warplanes with a machine gun and when his ammo ran out he watched helplessly as more bombers dropped torpedoes into the water that exploded and sank the other battleships around him. Other planes attacked his ship and dropped bombs scoring direct hits. The explosions everywhere rained down flaming oil and metal, filled the sky with billowing black smoke the blocked out the sun and the water was covered with oil, debris, and dead bodies.

A couple years later in the war Frank fought on several Pacific Islands as an infantryman. On Iwo Jima he caught some hand grenade pieces with his body, and on another island he got too close again to some Japanese defenders that resulted in literally hand to hand combat; one soldier put a bayonet into one of Frank's hands; Frank killed him with his .45 cal sidearm at point blank range. He later watched fellow troops set upon dead enemy soldiers and remove gold fillings from their teeth as war trophies. He got a battlefield commission and became a military officer for the rest of his career in the Marine Corps. When Frank recounted some of his war experiences to me he was sometimes emotionally shaken; I could see that his memories still haunted him 70 years later. He confided that that he had not shared all of his combat experiences to his wife, and he never would. I was always reminded of Frank when I saw the close quarter combat scenes in the movie The Thin Red Line, which I think pretty accurately captured the essence of that time period and those events in graphic chaotic detail. He told me that most of the enemy soldiers he encountered were scrawny and malnourished and he felt sorry for them.



Our volunteer program went through a number of uniform changes, and eventually we changed the name to a "Citizen Volunteer Program" and lowered the minimum age to 21, since we started having a hard time recruiting older folks. I hired probably 50 volunteers during the 9 years I ran the program. More than a few of them died while enrolled in the program; I went to more than a few funerals.

The Seattle Post Intelligencer newspaper did a little feature story once about our volunteer program. The article is long gone but I did find this fine photo they took.

RESERVE OFFICER COORDINATOR & FIELD TRAINING OFFICER

Because I guess I was a motivated go-getter, I also took on the duty of being the department's Reserve Officer Program Coordinator for a few years, which is what you call the guy who manages and oversees the volunteer (unpaid) officers. During that time I recruited and hired a dozen new volunteer police officers and I helped them through our multi-jurisdictional county reserve schooling course. Later I also fired about half of them for various offenses, because, well..reasons. I liked being their supervisor but I was always a little nervous one of them would do something bad and cause a huge lawsuit against the city and drag me into it for failing to train them on some particular aspect of something. So I kept them all well trained about everything and I enjoyed being their leader and teaching them things. I wrote a new training manual and qualifications guide for them all, and they rode with me and the other officers a lot. Some eventually qualified and progressed to solo patrol, meaning they could go out and inflict law and order on the general public all by themselves.

I remember one night we had a training on how to do building searches, specifically how to methodically and safely clear rooms at gunpoint while looking for bad guys hiding. I had managed to talk a local interior design store business owner into letting me use his new place, which had a lot of interesting display rooms connected by strange passageways. I sent the new reserve officers into the dark building in pairs and watched while they practiced their techniques. I also surreptitiously called their cell phones in the middle of the searches to see which ones had paid attention to my prior warning to turn the volume down on their phones before starting what was supposed to be a tactically quiet building search.



Most of our reserve officers were enlisted sailors from the submarine base. One of them was the chief of the boat, which is the highest rank an enlisted guy on a submarine can have; those guys are so knowledgeable that the sub captains usually just defers a lot of personnel related matters to the COB directly. Another of our reserves was a retired air force pilot. Ah hell, I'll just make a list of the more interesting ones that I can remember. Let's see, we had more than one Navy Corpsman, a Navy Diver, a whole bunch of other Navy guys I can't remember what they did exactly, a Washington State Ferries system safety officer, a commercial laundry delivery company driver, a tribal casino gaming agent, a Microsoft Patent Attorney, a golf club pro, a corrections officer, a grocery store clerk, an IT guy, a Seattle Fire Department Lieutenant, and a civil lawyer specializing in land use regulations. Those are the just the ones I remember; I'd say I altogether probably worked with 60 reserve officers over the years, but most only lasted a year or two. Especially the navy guys who got transferred away from the submarine base.

Back in the '90's when we had a couple dozen reserve officers, every Friday and Saturday night at least a few would come out to play with us. We had them classified/ranked as "First Class" "Second Class" and "Third Class." First Class guys could solo patrol all by themselves. It took a couple years of OJT for them to get that level of efficiency, of course. Third Class guys were the new and inexperienced ones, good for riding in the passenger seat and running after fleeing felons on foot. Second Class RO's could drive police cars with the regular officers in the passenger seat supervising them. We'd also use Second Class RO's to drive prisoners to the jail for us, which was helpful for us and didn't require any real police action on their part; they were essentially armed transport chauffeurs then.

We screened our reserve officer applicants before we hired them; the ones we accepted went to a Reserve Academy course that was usually hosted at the community college in Bremerton on weeknights. The total course lasted 3 or 4 months, and also included full Saturdays of instruction. It was basically just a shortened version of the real police academy class, and in addition to the classroom instruction there were defensive tactics classes, practical exercises in handcuffing and driving police cars and practicing felony stops, etc.

Eventually we had to screen the applicants better to include a psychiatric exam and a polygraph/lie detector test. Each test cost $300 and the PD paid for them. So we had to start getting really discriminating about who we hired and spent $600 dollars on, because if they failed either test we were out a bit of money.

Once we started testing the applicants, the number of them who qualified dropped considerably as we weeded out the ones with questionable background incidents. So the days of sending ten guys off the reserve academy were over; 5, 4, or 3 was the new number. I remember one painful incident when we had to drop a candidate who had failed the polygraph test: He was a superstar enlisted sailor stationed on one of the local Trident subs. His education, training, and professional navy accomplishments were beyond comparison. He was super smart and even better, had enough common sense to be able to make hard decisions in the absence of clear and easy black and white scenarios. But he didn't want to admit to the polygraph examiner his past history of drug abuse. At first he completely denied it, but when the failed the test the examiner let him try again, after assuring him that the Department of the Navy would never find out the results of the test. So the examiner started over and the guy admitted that back in high school he had smoked marijuana a few times. But he still failed the test; the results were still showing some deception. The examiner talked to him some more, and convinced the sailor to fess up. So he then admitted he had smoke actually a lot of marijuana, like maybe once a weekend during his senior year. But still the machine showed deception on the squiggly lines bring printed out. The polygraph test, normally an hour or so, became a three hour ordeal. So they tried again, and the sailor admitted that well, he had been a dope smoking fiend and was using the stuff like every day in high school. The examiner thanked him to being truthful, continued to assure him the Navy would never find out, and that we didn't really care how much dope he had smoked back then because in his career since then he's being clean and law abiding. But after the test the examiner came to me and shook his head. "He's still hiding something else," he told me. "I think he was using some harder drugs back then too, but he just won't admit it no matter how much I try to get him to." So we never could hire that sailor as a reserve officer, which was really sad because he was just so super smart and capable. Police officers – the paid full time ones and the volunteers, have to be proven impeccable in their word and trustworthiness is of extreme paramount importance. Officers who have a record of telling even one lie are subject to a US Supreme Court ruling that requires prosecutors to tell any and all defense attorneys that that officer has a history of lying. And so of course defense attorneys love hearing that; it calls into question all sorts of elements of doubt in the prosecution's case when that officer is involved in charging a defendant with a crime. Hence, we can't hire anybody who is less than truthful during their background checks.



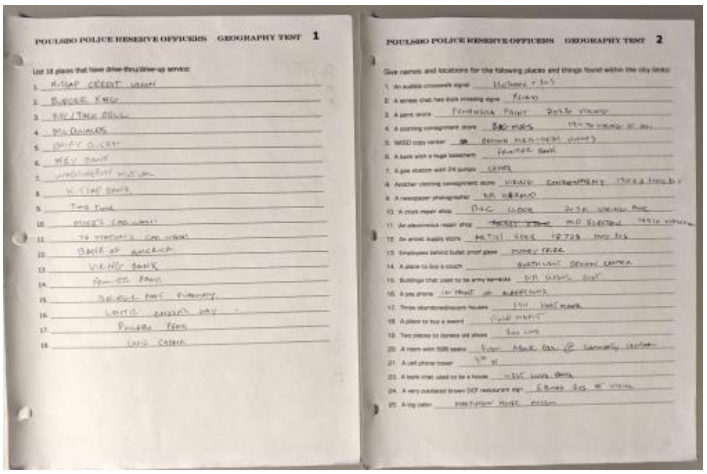
Toward the end of my career our department got down to only a few reserve officers. Just like what happened with the full-time officers, the total number of interested candidates dropped considerably over the years. And not just for our department; this was a nationwide trend – there were just a lot fewer folks who wanted to get into police work, for all the reasons you could probably imagine.

Later on in my career I became a state certified Field Training Officer, which is what you call the experienced officer who takes the rookie officers from the academy and introduces them to actual police work on the streets. I'm talking real, paid officers, not volunteers. So I trained a few of the new officers we hired and wound up at one point rewriting our Field Training Officer/New Hire checklist/manual which I guess was one my specialties. I updated it regularly and it was used for all the new volunteer reserve officers and the new paid officers that we hired.

At one point I also applied for an opening on the county's multi-agency SWAT team after they announced they needed a position filled. I passed the physical fitness test but during the interview process I lost out to a Bremerton police officer who had prior experience as a Special Forces soldier before becoming a police officer, something I couldn't compete with so I didn't feel bad about not making the team.

For quite a few years afterward, I'd get letters or calls from employers, inquiring about guys who had been a reserve officer and had listed me as a reference. Of course the only ones who did that were the ones who left in good graces, so it was easy for me to give them good recommendations.

I recently came across one of my old Reserve Officer checklist books, which I got a kick out of. Here are some of the pages that they needed to sign off on, for your reading pleasure. If you care. You can skip ahead if you want; you won't be tested on any of this.


POULSBO POLICE RESERVE OFFICERS GEOGRAPHY TEST 1

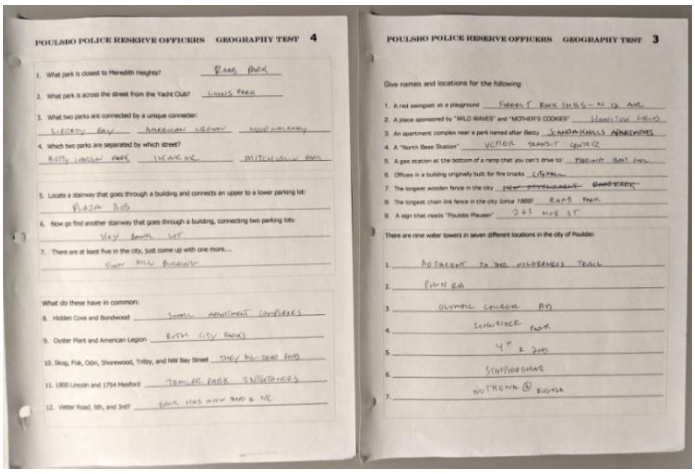
List 18 places that have drive-thru/drive-up service:

1. KITSAP CREDIT UNION
2. BURGER KING
3. TACO TIME
4. MIL DOLLARS
5. DAIRY QUEEN
6. WEST BANK
7. WASHINGTON MUTUAL
8. KITSAP BANK
9. TACO TIME
10. MIKE'S DRIVE-IN
11. 76 STATION'S CONVENIENCE
12. BANK OF AMERICA
13. VIKING BANK
14. PEOPLES BANK
15. SEATTLE FIRST FUNERAL
16. UNITED BUILDERS BANK
17. POULSBO FEED
18. EXXON CASHIER

POULSBO POLICE RESERVE OFFICERS GEOGRAPHY TEST 2

Give names and locations for the following places and things found within the city limits:

1. An audible crosswalk signal — MADISON & 6TH
2. A street that has dual crossing signs — FJORD
3. A paint store — FRANKLIN PAINT — POPLAR WAY
4. A clothing consignment store — B&G KIDS — 19475 HIGHWAY 305
5. NASD copy center — DENNIS INSTRUMENT WORKS
6. A bank with a huge basement — FRONTIER BANK
7. A gas station with 24 pumps — CENEX
8. Another clothing consignment store — URBAN CONSIGNMENTS — 19434 FRONTAGE
9. A newspaper photographer — MR. HERALD
10. A clock repair shop — D&C CLOCK — 2232 VIKING AVE
11. An electronics repair shop — [illegible] — MD ELECTRIC — 19530 VIKING
12. An animal supply store — METRO PETS — 18725 FRONTAGE
13. Employees behind bullet proof glass — MONEY TREE
14. A place to buy a couch — NORTHWEST DESIGN CENTER
15. Buildings that used to be army barracks — 5TH GRADE CAMP
16. A gas pump — IN FRONT OF ALBERTSONS
17. Three abandoned/unused houses — 5TH AVE PARK
18. A place to buy a sword — CLUB MARIS
19. Two places to donate old shoes — THRIFT
20. A room with 1000 seats — FJORD BANK INC @ COMMUNITY CENTER
21. A cell phone tower — 5TH AVE
22. A bank that used to be a house — FIRST SOUND BANK
23. A very outdated brown DOT restaurant sign — EXXON GAS & SNACKS
24. A big cedar — NORTHERN HOUSE DESIGN


POULSBO POLICE RESERVE OFFICERS GEOGRAPHY TEST 4

1. What park is closest to Meredith Heights? RAIL PARK
2. What park is across the street from the Yacht Club? LIONS PARK
3. What two parks are connected by a unique connector: LIBERTY BAY — AMERICAN LEGION — NORTHLAWN
4. Which two parks are separated by which street? RUBY LOOP PARK — VIKING AVE — MITCHELL AVE PARK
5. Locate a stairway that goes through a building and connects an upper to a lower parking lot: PLAZA 305
6. Now go find another stairway that goes through a building, connecting two parking lots: WAY SOUTH OF
7. There are at least five in the city, just come up with one more... FIRE HALL BANQUET

What do these have in common:

8. Hidden Cove and Bondwood — SMALL APARTMENT COMPLEXES
9. Oyster Plant and American Legion — BOTH CITY PARKS
10. Skog, Fisk, Odin, Shorewood, Trilby, and NW Bay Street — ONLY NE DEAD ENDS
11. 1800 Lincoln and 1754 Hesford — TRAILER PARK SUBDIVISIONS
12. Vetter Road, 9th, and 3rd? — EACH HAS ANOTHER 3RD & NE

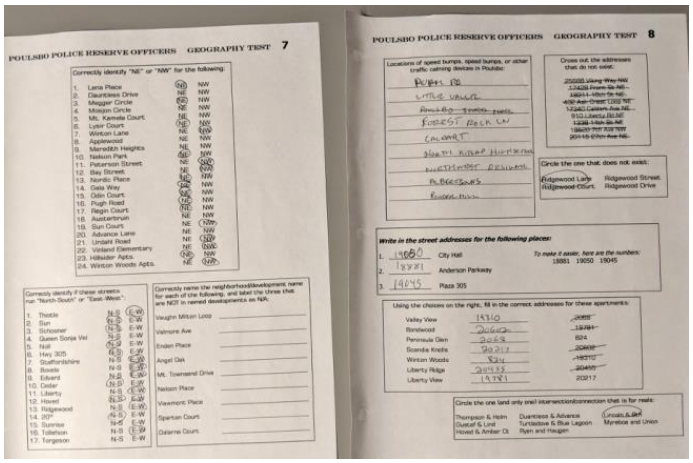
POULSBO POLICE RESERVE OFFICERS GEOGRAPHY TEST 3

Give names and locations for the following:

1. A rest swingset at a playground — FORREST ROSE HILLS - N 12 AVE
2. A place sponsored by "WILD WAVES" and "MOTHER'S COOKIES" — HAMILTON FIELD
3. An apartment complex near a park named after Betty — SANDA KNOLL APARTMENTS
4. A "North Base Station" — VICTOR TRANSIT CENTER
5. A gas station at the bottom of a ramp that you can't drive to: — PARENT BAY INN
6. Offices in a building originally built for fire trucks — USTMA
7. The longest wooden fence in the city — NEW DEVELOPMENT — DEAD END
8. The longest chain link fence in the city (since 1999) — RAMS TOW
9. A sign that reads "Poulsbo Pleasen" — 261 NOE ST

There are nine water towers in seven different locations in the city of Poulsbo:

1. NOTABLY TO THE LIBERTY TRACK
2. FOUR
3. OLYMPIC COLLEGE BAY
4. SCHOOLER PARK
5. 4TH & 2ND
6. STAFFORDSHIRE
7. NOTHING @ BUSH


POULSBO POLICE RESERVE OFFICERS GEOGRAPHY TEST 7

Correctly identify "NE" or "NW" for the following:

1. Lens Place	(NE)	NW
2. Dauntless Drive	NE	(NW)
3. Megger Circle	(NE)	NW
4. Mission Circle	NE	(NW)
5. Mt. Kamele Court	(NE)	NW
6. Lyse Court	NE	(NW)
7. Winton Lane	NE	(NW)
8. Applewood	NE	NW
9. Meredith Heights	NE	NW
10. Nelson Park	(NE)	NW
11. Peterson Street	NE	(NW)
12. Bay Street	(NE)	NW
13. Nordic Place	NE	(NW)
14. Gala Way	(NE)	NW
15. Odin Court	(NE)	NW
16. Pugh Road	(NE)	NW
17. Regin Court	NE	NW
18. Austertrun	NE	(NW)
19. Sun Court	NE	(NW)
20. Advance Lane	NE	(NW)
21. Urdahl Road	NE	(NW)
22. Vetland Elementary	(NE)	NW
23. Hillsider Apts.	(NE)	NW
24. Winton Woods Apts.	NE	(NW)

Correctly identify if these streets run "North-South" or "East-West":

1. Thistle	(N-S)	E-W
2. Sun	(N-S)	E-W
3. Schooner	(N-S)	E-W
4. Queen Sonja Vei	N-S	E-W
5. Noll	(N-S)	E-W
6. Hwy 305	(N-S)	E-W
7. Staffordshire	N-S	(E-W)
8. Bowdo	N-S	(E-W)
9. Edvard	(N-S)	E-W
10. Cedar	(N-S)	E-W
11. Liberty	N-S	(E-W)
12. Hoved	(N-S)	E-W
13. Ridgewood	N-S	(E-W)
14. 207th	(N-S)	E-W
15. Sunrise	N-S	(E-W)
16. Tollefson	N-S	(E-W)
17. Torgerson	N-S	E-W

Correctly name the neighborhood/development name for each of the following, and label the three that are NOT in named developments as N/A:

Vaughn Mitton Loop	
Valmore Ave	
Enden Place	
Angel Oak	
Mt. Townsend Drive	
Nelson Place	
Vavmont Place	
Spartan Court	
Odenne Court	

POULSBO POLICE RESERVE OFFICERS GEOGRAPHY TEST 8

Locations of speed bumps, speed humps, or other traffic calming devices in Poulsbo:

BUMPS RD
LITTLE VALLEY
POULSBO SYNOD DRIVE
FOREST ROCK LN
CALVART
NORTH KITSAP HUSKY
NORTHWEST DESIGN
ALBERTSONS
PARKWOOD

Cross out the addresses that do not exist:

~~25000 Viking Way NW~~
~~17425 Front St NE~~
~~18911 10th Pl NE~~
~~430 Ash Creek Cond NE~~
~~17240 Lisbon Ave NE~~
~~910 Liberty Rd NE~~
~~1238 15th St NE~~
~~18870 7th 305 NW~~
~~20116 67th Ave NE~~

Circle the one that does not exist:

Ridgewood Lane — Ridgewood Street
Ridgewood Court — Ridgewood Drive

Write in the street addresses for the following places:

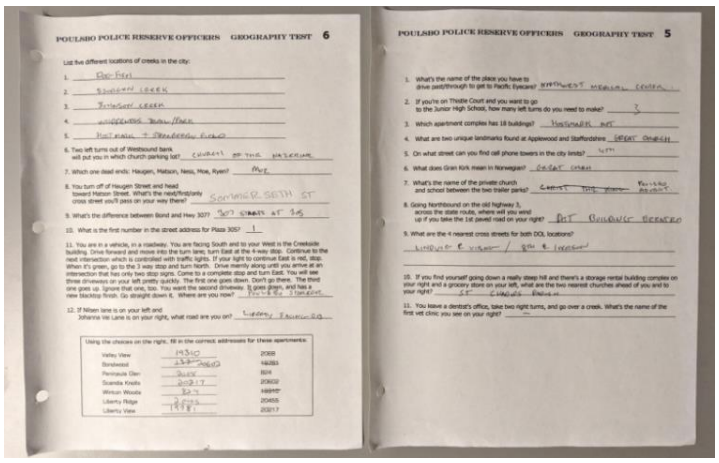
1. 19680 — City Hall — To make it easier, here are the numbers: 18881 19050 19045
2. 19191 — Anderson Parkway
3. 19475 — Plaza 305

Using the choices on the right, fill in the correct addresses for these apartments:

Valley View	19310
Bondwood	20060
Peninsula Glen	2055
Scandia Knolls	20317
Winton Woods	324
Liberty Ridge	20455
Liberty View	19191

Circle the one land only one) intersection/connection that is for reals:

Thompson & Holm — Duantless & Advance — (Lincoln & 3rd)
Gustaf & Lind — Turtleblow & Blue Lagoon — Myrtleoe and Union
Hoved & Amber Ct. — Ryan and Haugen


POULSBO POLICE RESERVE OFFICERS GEOGRAPHY TEST 6

List five different locations of creeks in the city:

1. FISH TRAIL
2. SUQUAMISH CREEK
3. DOGFISH CREEK
4. WOODARDS TRAIL/PARK
5. HATCHERY + DEADFISH POND

6. Two left turns out of Westbound Bank will put you in which church parking lot? CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE
7. Which one dead ends: Haugen, Hatton, Ness, Moe, Ryan? MOE
8. You turn off of Haugen Street and head toward Hanson Street. What's the next/first/only cross street you'll pass on your way there? SUNRISE SOUTH ST
9. What's the difference between Bond and Hwy 305? 305 STARTS AT 3RD
10. What is the first number in the street address for Plaza 305? 1

11. You are in a vehicle, in a roadway. You are facing South and to your West is the Creekside building. Drive forward and move into the turn lane; turn East at the 4-way stop. Continue to the next intersection which is controlled with traffic lights. If your light to continue East is red, stop. When it's green, go to the 3 way stop and turn North. Drive merrily along until you arrive at an intersection that has only two stop signs. Come to a complete stop and turn East. You will see three driveways on your left pretty quickly. The first one goes down. Don't go there. The third one goes up. Ignore that one, too. You want the second driveway. It goes down, and has a new Mackay finish. Go straight down it. Where are you now? FRONT STREET

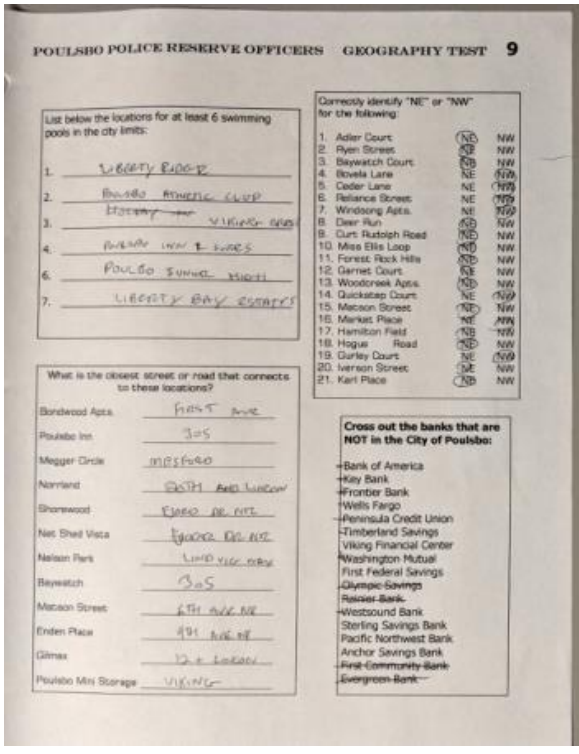
12. If Nilen lane is on your left and Johanna Vei Lane is on your right, what road are you on? LIBERTY TRAIL

Using the choices on the right, fill in the correct addresses for these apartments:

Valley View	19310
Bondwood	20060
Peninsula Glen	2055
Scandia Knolls	20317
Winton Woods	324
Liberty Ridge	20455
Liberty View	19191

POULSBO POLICE RESERVE OFFICERS GEOGRAPHY TEST 5

1. What's the name of the place you have to drive past/through to get to Pacific Eyecare? NORTHWEST MEDICAL CENTER
2. If you're on Thistle Court and you want to go to the Junior High School, how many left turns do you need to make? 3
3. Which apartment complex has 18 buildings? HOSMARK APT
4. What are two unique landmarks found at Applewood and Staffordshire — GREAT DANES
5. On what street can you find cell phone towers in the city limits? 4TH
6. What does Gran Kirk mean in Norwegian? GREAT CHURCH
7. What's the name of the private church and school between the two trailer parks? CHRIST THE KING — POULSBO ADVENT
8. Going Northbound on the old highway 3, across the state route, where will you wind up if you take the 1st paved road on your right? PAT CATHOLIC CEMETERY
9. What are the 4 nearest cross streets for both DOL locations? LINCOLN & VIKING / 8TH & IVERSON
10. If you find yourself going down a really steep hill and there's a storage rental building complex on your right and a grocery store on your left, what are the two nearest churches ahead of you and to your right? ST. CHARLES — EMMANUEL
11. You have a dentist's office, take two right turns, and go over a creek. What's the name of the first vet clinic you see on your right? —


POULSBO POLICE RESERVE OFFICERS GEOGRAPHY TEST 9

List below the locations for at least 6 swimming pools in the city limits:

1. LIBERTY RIDGE
2. POULSBO ATHLETIC CLUB
3. ~~LIBERTY BAY~~ VIKING APTS
4. POULSBO INN & SUITES
6. POULSBO JUNIOR HIGH
7. LIBERTY BAY ESTATES

Correctly identify "NE" or "NW" for the following:

1. Adler Court	(NE)	NW
2. Ryen Street	(NE)	NW
3. Baywatch Court	(NE)	NW
4. Bovela Lane	NE	(NW)
5. Cedar Lane	NE	(NW)
6. Reliance Street	NE	(NW)
7. Windsong Apts.	NE	(NW)
8. Deer Run	(NE)	NW
9. Curt Rudolph Road	(NE)	NW
10. Miss Ellis Loop	(NE)	NW
11. Forest Rock Hills	(NE)	NW
12. Garnet Court	(NE)	NW
13. Woodcreek Apts.	(NE)	NW
14. Quicksteep Court	NE	(NW)
15. Matson Street	(NE)	NW
16. Market Place	NE	(NW)
17. Hamilton Field	(NE)	NW
18. Hogue Road	(NE)	NW
19. Gurley Court	NE	(NW)
20. Iverson Street	(NE)	NW
21. Kari Place	(NE)	NW

What is the closest street or road that connects to these locations?

Bondwood Apts.	FIRST AVE
Poulsbo Inn	305
Megger Circle	MESFORD
Norrland	8TH AND LINCOLN
Shorewood	FJORD DR NE
Net Shed Vista	FJORD DR NE
Nelson Park	LINDVIG DRIVE
Baywatch	305
Matson Street	6TH AVE NE
Enden Place	9TH AVE NE
Gilmax	12 + LINCOLN
Poulsbo Mini Storage	VIKING

Cross out the banks that are NOT in the City of Poulsbo:

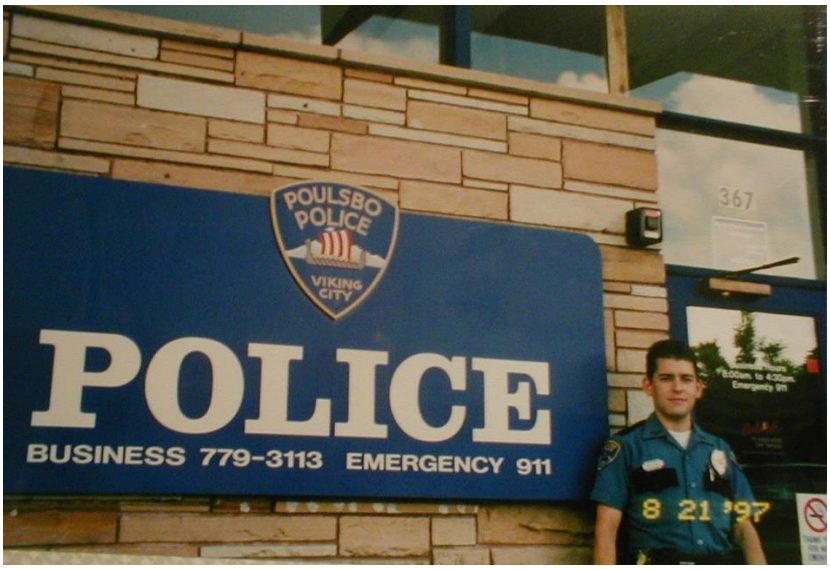
~~Bank of America~~
~~Key Bank~~
~~Frontier Bank~~
~~Wells Fargo~~
~~Peninsula Credit Union~~
~~Timberland Savings~~
~~Viking Financial Center~~
~~Washington Mutual~~
~~First Federal Savings~~
~~Olympic Savings~~
~~Rainier Bank~~
~~Westsound Bank~~
~~Sterling Savings Bank~~
~~Pacific Northwest Bank~~
~~Anchor Savings Bank~~
~~First Community Bank~~
~~Evergreen Bank~~

POULSBO POLICE RESERVE OFFICERS GEOGRAPHY TEST 10

Give names and/or locations for the following places and things found in the city:

1. A commuter park and ride lot — CHRIST MEMORIAL CHURCH
2. Another park and ride parking lot — CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE
3. Another park and ride parking lot — HANSEN & PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
4. A row of parking strips labeled "Government Vehicle Only" — CREEK SIDE CENTER
5. A house with a curved roof - NOT a geo dome — 18769 6TH AVE
6. A large public fire pit — LIBERTY BAY PARK
7. A huge parking lot that is half asphalt/half concrete — PRE NICK
8. A clock tower — SPENCER LAUNDRY
9. Another clock tower — BAY DY
10. A large public clock face with a Viking portrait on the other side — BATTY STREET
11. 3 large storm water retention ponds in one fenced-in enclosed area — PRE NICK
12. A flag pole with both an American flag and the WA State flag on it: — POULSBO PARK
13. Another flag pole with those same two flags on it — CITY HALL
14. A small boat, totally filled with dirt — FJORD ST @ 9TH
15. Four green traffic lights in a row but no left turn allowed — O'HAVA WAY
16. The lonyl apartment complex with two entrances/exits — HOSMARK APTS
17. A large carved wooden fisherman/sailing captain in front of a house — 18667 4TH AVE
18. Another large carved wooden fisherman/sailing captain in front of a house — 459 HAT MARA
19. A restaurant's back-door outside walk-in cooler 15 feet from a road — ~~CAFE'S~~ LES CABAS CAFE
20. A 10-foot painted rainbow — CHRIST MEMORIAL CHURCH PLAYGROUND
21. A row of parking strips labeled "Government Vehicle Only" — CREEK SIDE CENTER
22. An underground large storm water retention reservoir smack dab in the middle of and under a big parking lot — SOUTH KITSAP FAIRGROUNDS

PROPERTY & EVIDENCE ROOM CUSTODIAN





One day early in my career, one of my sergeants caught me a moment of naïve vulnerability. "Hey Nick, how you would like to be.... the.... custodian in charge of the property and evidence room?" For some reason I said sure. It was a regrettable decision. I quickly realized that I had been suckered into a much bigger job than I had imagined, once I realized how disorganized all the evidence and paperwork was, but I was stuck there because nobody else wanted to take over. Like all my other collateral duties, I took care of this one in my free time when I wasn't patrolling. So whenever the 911 dispatchers needed me to go do something while I was doing evidence work I'd simply lock up the room and get back to it later. I usually spent several hours a week in there trying to organize several years' worth of bad filing.

The evidence room was set up in the doctor's office old operating room where he would perform minor operations, so there were still light green tiles on the floor and halfway up the walls. For a little bit of decoration, I hung a license plate on the wall that I had taken from a lawbreaker; the plate was not an official state-issued plate but instead came from the church called "Kingdom of Heaven."



Previously all of the property and evidence had been overseen by whichever officer was working as the detective and none of them ever enjoyed that extra work. It didn't take me long to regret my decision and as the months turned into years I regretted it more and more but I did the best I could. I developed a new filing system using a lot of boxes and notebook binders.

It took several months to clean out the evidence room but I managed to eventually get everything squared away enough to pass our department's first ever State Accreditation, which was a comprehensive three day audit of absolutely everything in our department that we had to prepare for during the previous year. I also kept all the property and evidence inventoried well enough to get re-accredited a year later without any problems. Both accomplishments were pretty a pretty significant testament to my organizational skills, yes, thank you very much.

We had a lot of well-meaning citizens turn in lost and found bicycles to our department. Actually they'd just call and ask for a patrol officer to come pick up bicycles that had been taken for joyrides and ditched in their yards or parking lots or whatever. Some years, we'd average one found bike every 2 or 3 weeks. Bicycles take up a lot of space. Just about every single one of them was in pretty poor condition and the owners probably always knew it so they were probably glad somebody stole them. The return rate of found bicycles was less than 1 percent. Meaning for every 100 bicycles we recovered, only 1 would be returned to the owner. The other 99 owners didn't care enough to ever check with us to see if we had found their bikes. Did I mention bicycles take up a lot of space? We had to throw them in a big pile out in the large storage shed in the back parking lot.

Because officers were constantly putting more new items in the evidence lockers that I had to take out and file - like several items per week – I had to schedule a rotation system to get rid of old evidence. Of course this required clearance from the prosecutor's office, to assure the items weren't needed for court in any way.

We had a large collection of handguns and rifles in there. When they were cleared to be destroyed, I took them over to the Public Works shop and the mechanic there cut them all in half with a big metal chop saw.



The first time I did a big clean out of the evidence room, I filled a couple of large garbage bags full of evidence of all kinds, but most of it was drugs seized from people off the streets; small baggies of marijuana and meth and various assorted pills and a lot of smoking pipes and lighters and things of that nature. Most of the drugs were disposed of handily by me when I discovered I could simply dump them down into the storm drain in our back parking lot. (there were less rules and regulations back then, sorry) But I had to get rid of a lot of the evidence bag packaging which was sometimes in several layers of different kinds of paper and plastic bags; after a while it all takes up space. So I filled a couple bags full of empty packaging and took them over to the public works department where one of the garbage truck drivers let me throw them into the back of a garbage truck. He turned on the hydraulic back scooper/masher/compactor thing and the truck ate the bags and shoved them deep into itself. The truck was already full with garbage from dozens of earlier pickups from city businesses and homes and as I saw the bags get mashed into there and saw who knows what kinds of liquids drip out from the compacted mass, I thought for sure they were gone forever.

The next day the director of the public works department was a little confused when he called me to report finding random police evidence packaging bags scattered and hidden in some of their office garbage bins. I hustled over there and with wide eyes confirmed they had been in the two large black plastic garbage bags that I had personally watched the garbage truck swallow.



Well clearly some employee there had gone back later and retrieved those bags from the truck. I don't think there were any real measurable amounts of drugs in there; so the culprit could only lick residue from some of the bags. We later found out it who it was. He got then fired for some other offenses and so he then went home and ate a bullet from his .38 revolver. His head got blown back so hard into the wall he was up against that it left a dent in the wallboard.

The next time I had a big cleaning out event, we decided the whole using the garbage truck idea was obviously out of the question, so we settled on destruction by fire. (Again…totally permissible back in those days..) A local fire fighter was burning an old barn on his property and he said we could put all our evidence in there. So we drove out about 40 file boxes full of all kinds of evidence. And literally threw them into the inferno, which was already going by the time we got there. The supervising sergeant asked me if I had found all the random rounds of ammo and although I assured him that I had, he somehow found a full box of .22 caliber shells that we decided probably should not be burned. So then we had to hand sort everything and found to my chagrin a couple of loaded shotgun shells. It also gave the sergeant a great opportunity to set aside a little pile of radio scanners and trinkets and assorted other items that "he would personally see get disposed of," he said with a wink. "Someday in the future."



My enthusiasm for being the property and evidence custodian was rather low; I did not really enjoy being the custodian of all the evidence. Each case report that had evidence or found property got a three-page/triplicate form and each form required multiple signatures. To get state accredited, which means "meeting the current best recognized standards" required getting an alarm system for the evidence room, along with the keys for all the locks and safes. It was a lot of extra work, I got paid nothing extra of course, and it was a ton of extra responsibility. So I started telling the sergeants that should find some other cop to bestow this great opportunity to. Eventually I lucked out, and it was all because an old woman got killed with a golf club.

In a nearby neighboring city, the evidence custodian for their department was one of their detectives. Seemed like a good idea at the time. Until the murder. Then the detective/evidence custodian got subpoenaed to testify in court for the trial, where the accused murdered was being tried for clubbing to death an old woman in her apartment, using her dead husband's old golf clubs. She had lived in an apartment above the newspaper office, and the crime was discovered when her blood soaked through the floor and ceiling and started dripping onto the desks of the newspapers staffers. During the trial the detective was mercilessly questioned by the defense attorneys who tried to suggest to the jury that since he had collected the evidence at the scene and then had access to it all in the evidence room, then he could have easily tampered with it all and so therefore all of the evidence should be disqualified. The defense attorneys failed in that tactic and their client was convicted of the murder, but it was enough to convince everybody that detectives and/or patrol officers should probably not also be in charge of the police evidence room.

So my duty was turned over to our support staff of clerks, which worked okay until one of them, um, got caught stealing money, jewelry, and guns. She went to off to prison, in one of the more spectacular falls from grace I've personally witnessed.





POLICE CARS

Police cars and the technology in them improved considerably during the time that I wore a badge and drove them as a professional public safety first responder. I had a front row seat to some of the changes, and I had experience with enough of them to write a bit here for your amusement, if you're the kind of person who might be interested in old police cars. My first assigned patrol car was a 4 year old small white boxy and lightweight 1989 Plymouth Gran Fury 4 door sedan, which was completely unremarkable and originally purchased by the police chief only because it was one of the cheapest options at the time. Here's me, also with my new personally-owned 1994 5th generation Honda Civic. Both cars were equally spartan, and neither had power windows. The Civic though at least had a cassette tape deck. The Gran Fury had an old standard bench seat up front, as was the custom back then.





The Gran Fury required tire chains or cables whenever it snowed. It was not really a special police specific car, it was just a regular old production line car that had a spotlight added to the A pillar post, a lightbar added to the roof, a pair of push bumpers on the front, and a police radio wired in under the dashboard. Oh and a heavy duty partition installed behind the drivers seat to keep the bad guys safely in the back. Like all other police cars back then, it had key-only door locks (no remotes) and the door windows were manually and quite literally rolled up and rolled down with a hand crank on the doors. Our department had two of those Plymouths (identical to same vintage General Motors Dodge Diplomats) and the rest of our cars back then were a mix of some old 80's model Ford Crown Victoria LTD's and an odd Chevrolet Malibu, also circa 1987 or so.

We kept each cars in service for about 7 years, because back in those days they'd start to break down too often at around 75,000 miles and cost too much to repair and keep maintained. Our 7 year replacement cycle was pretty much an industry standard, although some agencies with money replaced their patrol cars after literally only a few years, and at the opposite end of the spectrum some cash-strapped agencies would try to make their cars last 10 or more years. When our cars got to old age and started requiring too many expensive repairs, we'd strip off their decals and lights and siren and radio and we'd auction them off. My old patrol car here was sold for all of $800 dollars in 1996.



In 2017 I came across a restored vintage police Gran Fury so I snapped this pic. Yep, mine looked pretty much exactly like this one, complete with the several round gauges that had nothing in them. Check out that in-dash AM/FM radio!

I had the Gran Fury for a couple of years and only had two real notable adventures with it. Wait, I had three: The first one was during a dark evening patrol one night when I was slowly cruising through the American Legion park on the waterfront. The park was a popular spot for kids and teens to hang out and smoke dope in the woods, so regular patrols were warranted to keep the numbers down. At the end of the dirt road going into the park there was a turnaround area, but it was tight maneuvering because Public Works had installed a large round brick structure to hide some garbage cans and benches and a sign. It had built-in concrete benches jutting out from the side, but they were too close to the turnaround area and what looked like about a dozen or so cars over the years had not been able to make the turn and had scraped one of the concrete benches, reducing it to broken concrete with old rusted rebar sticking out. And dammit that rebar caught my right rear tire that night as I cranked the wheel hard to get turned around there. I thought I had cleared it but my calculation was off about by about two inches, which was enough for a very stiff piece of rebar to snag my tire and gouge a huge slash in it. And also dent the wheel's rim a significant bit. So, instant deflation, rendering my patrol car out of service. I looked at the damage and decided now would be a good time to get out the spare and replace it. At some point while I was getting out the jack and the tire and setting it up I figured that since I was all alone, if I could manage to switch the tire out successfully, then perhaps nobody else would ever need to know? So I went into top speed and removed the old tire and put the spare on in record time, bothered only once by a couple of reserve officers who rolled up on me and looked on with amusement when they saw how desperately fast I was moving. I assured them I had things under control so they left. A short time later the night sergeant called me on the radio, "Sam six-oh-one to paul six-ten," he called. "Six ten," I replied. "Hey, yeah, six ten, what's your location?"

Panic time? Why was he asking me where I was? Did he already know? Was he in fact watching me right now? I couldn't help but glance up and start looking around. "Six oh one," I replied, "Um, I'm in Legion Park." I was frozen, wondering if he was going to ask me what I was doing or worse, if he wanted me to come meet him somewhere. Or maybe he would come find me. Any scenario would benefit from me finishing the job with extreme speed, which I did. Got the spare on, threw the damaged tire and rim into the truck, and left the scene.

The next day I found a nice matching wheel at a junkyard, and had a tire put on it, and I put that into the truck and got rid of the damaged wheel and tire. Problem solved, and nobody ever found out about. So no harm, no foul. Of course the two reserve officers knew; one of them later became a full-time officer and a couple times in the decades to follow he'd laugh about that time when I looked so panicked trying to fix my blown-out tire in the dark.



Another time I backed up a little too far - literally only just a few inches – off a road and I got stuck. Specifically, I had backed up where a side road was being added to a main road and I went there on the first day of the new construction, when the main road shoulder had been cut and prepared to have the side road paved in to it. The cut was at least a foot deep and when I backed up too far the back end of my car when THUMP and both rear wheels fell off the road and I was totally immobile with the frame of the car right in front of the back wheels resting on the pavement. Oh did I mention this was at about 3 am. So at least there were no witnesses, except for Officer Romaine who I had to call to come help me. He was so happy that there was a stuck patrol car and it wasn't his that he was downright gleeful. He immediately called the night sergeant, who had just ended his shift and was sound asleep. "What"?!" I said. "No you don't need to call the sergeant!" I told him. "Oh yes I do," Romaine said. "It's in the policy book. Anytime you crash a patrol car, you have to inform the sergeant." I pointed out the car was not crashed, it just went off the road a little too much. Too late, Romaine had called Sergeant Playter and woken him up and he was busy describing the scene. "Is there any damage to anything?" asked the sergeant. When Romaine admitted no, no apparent damage, the sergeant growled "then just call a tow truck and get it back on the road." And he hung up. Romaine was still so thrilled about somebody else instead of him having a problem with a patrol car that he took a Polaroid picture of the scene, despite my pleas and protests. Tow truck guy came, hooked a cable on to the front end, and pulled it like one foot forward to get it up on the road. Again, no harm and no foul. Although I was pissed at Romaine for trying to make a big deal out of it.

I'll also add here that upon reflection, I believe I can say that I definitely operated an above-average number and wider variety of different makes and models of police cars than most other cops did, or do. For example, I knew some cops who drove literally only two different kinds of cars during their 20+ years of police work; for me though, I can say that I spent considerable time in at least 9 different kinds of patrol vehicles.







Last memory of my Gran Fury days was the time I went down Forest Rock Lane, a brand new road on a pretty steep hill. Oh this was around 2 am. The road was so new it hadn't even been paved yet; it was just a single dirt lane being cut through a thick stretch of woodland. When I saw it was open (but still under construction) I drove down to check it out, and discovered too late that the very bottom was cordoned off with a couple of large concrete barriers. The only way out was to go back up, but since it was still only a single lane dirt road there was no room to turn around. And it was at that point when I found out that the hill was too steep for my car to go back up it in reverse, because it was a rear-wheel drive car and the engine was in the front, meaning the rear end was too light to get enough traction. I called another officer (Not Romaine who off that night thank God) who came to my rescue. He parked at the top of the hill (good idea) and walked down, and then he got up on the back bumper while I put my car reverse. He had just enough weight to get the back wheels some traction, although more than a few times he had to literally jump up down to get the whole thing bouncing enough to bite into the loose dirt and gravel to keep the momentum up. Other than those incidents, I never crashed into anything or anybody and nothing else remarkable happened. Below: you can see my fancy portable/hand held radar gun, which rested on a mount on the dashboard.

Oh alright I'll add some more Plymouths. I was surfing online and feeling nostalgic. The first two have "dog dish" hubcaps to cover the lug nuts. Larger hubcaps usually didn't work on police cars; with all the normal hard swerving and cornering there's no way they would have stayed on. The white SPD car lightbar on the top had (only) two, maybe three rotating bulbs and mirror on each side.







Oh look here's me with a deputy taking down some desperados, in the front parking lot of the old PD, of all places:



We also had a blue unmarked Ford that I used on occasion. It had a couple of incandescent round blinking lights hidden in the grill and one deck light in the back window. Also the headlights could alternately flash, a feature called "wig wags." The metal roll bar/Plexiglas partition behind the driver's seat was sealed pretty tightly to the roof, creating a unique problem: at highway speeds with the front windows rolled down a bit, a huge difference in air pressure was created between the front and back seats which led to a severe air-sucking WHUMPWHUMPWHUMP that sounded like a helicopter inside, the kind of quick alternating air pressure that creates significant discomfort to one's ear drums. It was especially severe with this car. The problem though was easily fixed by opening the back windows more, or rolling up the front windows to seal the car from air getting in.



My Plymouth Gran Fury was replaced a couple years later with a larger boxy white 1980's model Ford LTD Crown Victoria. I have nothing too exciting to say about this one. Look close and you can see the steering wheel had a vinyl after-market grip wrapped onto it, which was very common back then. I drove mine for a couple years. I did not have any notable events in it, other than once having a lightbar on the roof overheat and catch on fire during a traffic stop. Bad wiring job. Not my fault.





My next car was a Chevrolet Caprice 9C1 model. It was a beefed-up version of the civilian Caprice; with oversized front and rear sway bars, a full size spare, a higher-output alternator, 4 wheel disc brakes, certified digital display speedometer, and extra upgrades that I don't know or care about, I'm just copying stuff from Wikipedia and you also probably don't care at all about the 3.08 final drive ratio (3.23 w/std. 200 hp/245 ft·lbf L99 V8 4.3 L (265 cid) SFI engine any more than I did, but I do remember that one of our Caprices had an engine that was actually the same as the stock corvettes which gave it very good acceleration. Under the giant hood, the internal combustion liquid fossil fueled engine compartment looked like this:



Those cars (we had I think three of them) had massive dashboards, I do remember that. The other thing I remember about that model is that the trunk was also positively ginormous. And we learned the hard way that any unsecured gear in the trunk, if given enough room to slide back and forth during any aggressive driving, would quickly dent out the sides of the back quarter panels from the inside out. Not a good look. Didn't happen to me, though. I kept my junk in the trunk tight.



I only had that car for a year or so. Basically, every spring when a new car showed up to be added to our fleet, whichever officer who got it would pass down his now-old car to somebody else, and then maybe that other officer's car would get passed along, and eventually the oldest car would be given to the newest rookie, or transferred to the reserve officer motor pool, or it would be sold at auction. So there was a lot of car shuffling and reassigning going on, and it gave me a good opportunity to drive a lot of different cars. I also remember the time we got brand new tire chains for snowy weather and the boxes of chains were all mislabeled. Meaning they said they were the right size, but there were literally just one inch too small. Which caused me a lot of grief when I was trying to put my set one day very cold snowy day and could not make them fit, even though I was positively sure they were the correct size. Literally just one inch too short! Sooo aggravatingly close! When my hands finally got too wet and frozen I gave up and when I came in to the station, the sergeant confirmed that none of the new chains were fitting. I felt a lot better then about my failed efforts.



Those Chevys were huge boats to drive. Lots of room inside though. Massive bench seat in the back. We outfitted all of them with push bars on the front to remove stalled and blocking vehicles from the roadways. As you can see, the graphics on the side were pretty basic; one color city shield on the doors and a blue pin stripe and yellow pin stripe taped above. Sad that I took so few pictures back then, this is all I have.

So a search of the innertubes revealed this generic Caprice interior, long after it was taken out of service. See what I meant about the dashboard being just huge? Also this model had two spotlights; one on each side.





Below: you can see what the instrument cluster looked like. Again, such a kind of mundane everyday sort of view that it never occurred to me take a photo of it during the years that I stared at this every day. My photo version would include the radio and siren set up though, so you could see what that looked like. I found these photos online; showing a good example of what they looked like on the inside. Yep, complete with the fancy plastic woodgrain paneling to give it a little extra class. Those Chevys were so popular that when they went out of production, a large refit company in Michigan did a good business for a few years of rebuilding old ones for police departments that wanted to keep them going. I remember seeing on the internet this company's parking lot and warehouse where they replaced the engines, seats, shocks, struts, etc…they had literally hundreds of cars lined up there being refurbished to get another 5 or 10 years of service out of them.

One of our department's Chevy's, retired from active duty, got transferred to our citizen volunteers for them to patrol around in. They never did any high speed driving of course, just slow cruising around town, so they were happy with an older car. To make sure nobody confused them with one of police patrol cars, we changed the lightbar covers on top from blue and red to all-amber. Here 'tis:



On my big list of things I regret, I have not taking a few more pictures those old cars. Especially from when I first started my career, because all of those old patrol cars were from the 1980's. It's not just me that didn't take enough pictures though – none of my coworkers ever walked around taking snapshots. In fact, I was the one officer who took the most pictures –more than everybody else combined. I almost never saw my coworkers back then taking pictures of anything, because cell phones hadn't been invented yet, we had to use mechanical film cameras and nobody back then apparently thought ahead enough to realize how interesting it would probably be to take pictures of just ordinary old things like regular old police cars; and not just the outside, but the insides, too.



Searching through my personal archives, I did find three more amusing examples to share now. Yep, this red thing is a for reals police car. Note the nifty clear outer housing of the lightbar; the blue and red lenses were inside.

For years, the Kitsap County Sheriff's office had a shiny gold foil scheme on their green patrol cars. And the Port Orchard PD





was starting to get a little fancy with their graphics; circa 2000:





Now if you've been playing close attention, you've no doubt noticed the emergency lighting units on the roofs of these old cars. Up through the late 1970's and even into the early 1980's, emergency lighting on police cars was limited to a simple bar mounted across the roof, hosting a couple of dome lights on each side and a siren in the middle. The original "lightbar." Clearly, that's the origination of the word. Here are two perfect examples:





Each dome light featured one light bulb in the middle, and a mirror that rotated around it to create a flashing effect.




That style of "lightbar" was followed by a series of ever-better more modern-looking lightbars over the years. These models had 4 rotating mirrors spinning around 4 light bulbs. No grille lights, and no dash lights or side mirror lights.





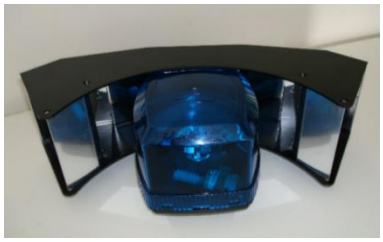

Of course back then we never thought these were lame in any way until newer models came out. And each new model we got, we thought was just the absolute coolest thing ever.







Speaking of crude ancient technology, most of our patrol cars got an extra auxiliary light or two for the back window. They looked exactly like this funny thing here; about 5 inches tall, plugged into a 12v accessory outlet. What we're looking at here is a blue housing that contained a small geared motor that spun a plastic reflector dish around a stationary halogen light bulb that stuck up in the middle. And behind and to the sides of this thing there were a couple of bent pieces of shiny metal that reflected the light. As the reflector spun around pretty fast, the light would appear to flash and with the added reflections in the back, it actually worked pretty well. The motor and the gears did make a bit of noise but it was considered state of the art back then. The snap-on front lenses also came in red, or the really fancy ones were half red and half blue. Having one (or even two) of these in the back window was much coveted and after a few years became just about required.



We kept each police vehicle on duty on for about 7 years. Although they would all have less than 100,000 miles on them at that age, the engines would all have thousands of hours of additional idle/running time on them, which contributed significantly to the overall wear. Some of our later model cars had a neat engine meter display in the dashboard, that would count how many hours the engine had been idling while we were parked along the side of a road working traffic, or writing tickets, etc. In fact, the average patrol car engine might be in idle mode more than actual driving for the majority of a daily shift. Engine hour counters were a pretty good idea; it reminding us (well, the mechanics, mostly) that even though, say, a 5 year old police car may have only 60,000 miles on it, the hundreds of hours of idling hours also certainly count because just about moving part under the hood was still moving; it was only the transmission and wheels that weren't moving. This is significant because an hour of idle time was equivalent to approximately 25 miles of actual road driving miles for the wear and tear sustained by the pistons, cam shaft, fuel pump, belts, carburetor, alternator, spark plugs, oil pump, etc.



Here the sergeant is mad that the fancy mechanical-display portable radar display board on the parked car was stuck, showing "76" mph instead of "25", which I thought was absolutely hilarious.



Over the years we also drove Ford Explorers, front wheel drive Chevy Impalas and Malibu's, Chevy Tahoes, and eventually Ford Interceptors SUV's. I drove a few different models of Ford Crown Victorias over the years.

Our cars used to be all white but one day when the sergeant ordered a couple replacement ones he checked the wrong box on the form and several months later we got one white car and, uh, one dark blue one delivered. We decided the blue color actually looked better so from then on they were all ordered in blue for many years, except Ford and Chevrolet had different ideas about what shade of blue to offer, and every other year or so their color would be just a little bit different from previous years' models. Most people couldn't tell the difference, though. Then we had a city central purchasing agent who was put in charge in charge of ordering cars for us and one year he marked the wrong color box on the form and when we got our first SUV, a large Ford Expedition, it was black instead of blue. Once we got over our shock we decided that black was better than blue and so eventually all of our new patrol vehicles were ordered in black, which is pretty much always a standard color and not subject to tone variation from year to year like the blue ones were. This photo is from 1991: 2 years before I got hired.



When my turn finally came up to get a brand new vehicle, I had the good fortune to be assigned a totally new kind of patrol vehicle; an extra large Ford Expedition SUV. We only got one, and in a highlight of my career, I was the one who got it. It was a radical change from our usual patrol cars. We needed a big vehicle to tow the new police boat, which was bigger and heavier than the old model. Unfortunately the general public did not agree with our line of thinking; those new Expedition models had only been out for a couple of years and the few out on the roads were the super expensive top of the line luxury models, driven mostly by rich folks on Bainbridge Island. So everybody just assumed our police model also cost $60,000 dollars and had the leather seats and upgraded everything. But it didn't! It was a stripped down version with no carpeting or extra features other than the lights and siren and police radio. But it did have a nice heavy duty push bar on the front bumper.

So I had to answer a lot of people's indignant and accusatory inquiries about why the police department was spending so many tax dollars on a police car, and I had to explain the utilitarian aspects and advantages of the 4x4 SUV vs. a regular police sedan and eventually as more police SUV's started showing up at other police departments and replacing the usual sedans, people began to understand and the public perception changed to general acceptance.



My Ford Expedition was a big beast with 4 wheel drive but it was not designed specifically for police duty and while it could go fast in a straight line, I had to slow way down to take corners or turns because it felt unstable and shaky like it would want to roll over at high speeds. I don't think I ever got much over 100mph in that thing. For the record here, my all-time top speed was 126 mph in the Chevy Caprice. No, I wasn't responding to an actual emergency, I just found myself on a highway with no traffic around and I took advantage of the opportunity to see what the car could do. It could do 126. Which was fast enough for me.







So anyway the Ford Expedition had some serious handling shortcomings but it was my first police vehicle to come with a key remote for the doors, (!) and the windows were also electric powered, which meant that when a citizen wanted to talk to me from outside my passenger side window, I didn't have to awkwardly stretch and lean over anymore to literally hand crank the window down. Literally. Roll it down. Back in those days the police cars we bought from the factory were either regular normal cars we had to upgrade with modifications, like electrical system improvements for extra load capacity, or we would sometimes be able to get factory upgraded "police package" cars, which might even include factory installed spot lights, extra fuses, a larger engine, a shotgun rack, traffic radar mounts, radio antennas, and bigger brake rotors. But every new police car had to spend a couple weeks in the city's public works garage getting prepared for police work by our city mechanic; a partition ("cage") was installed between the front and rear seats to keep the prisoners secure, a bumper push bar assembly would be bolted onto the front end, a light bar would be wired onto the roof, and the siren and switches and radios would be installed somewhere between the front seats. For this vehicle, I made my own center console to hold the siren and light switches. Made it out of pine boards, covered with thick headliner material to match the rest of the interior.





I had never seen one that big before but it seemed like a great idea. Because we had removed the stock cup holder console thing from between the two front seats there was a massive amount of room so I made it extra tall and wide so I could rest my arm on it comfortably with the emergency light switches right under my fingers. And there was a hinged lid to hold my ticket book and jacket in there, too. This was back in the day before computers terminals in cars were invented, so as you can see I had lots and lots of room. Nobody else had anything close to this and when it was completed I was quite pleased with myself.

I had a lot of room for gear and equipment in that thing. I eventually got used to the fact it could drive fast but only in a straight line; any high speed turning or cornering at speed was a tricky proposition; the whole rig felt just a little too heavy. Well that's a consequence of outfitting a regular old civilian model car to professional grade duty use, which was the case because nothing about that SUV from the factory was an upgrade for police driving. Pictured here: September 11th, 2002. First anniversary of 9/11; the local elementary school wanted to do something for the police.



Here are some more pics from those years:







You like that lightbar thing on the top? That was a brand new "Vector" style. It was actually pretty fancy and cool back then. But it wasn't perfect, because the Expedition was so tall. It took a lot of convincing and whining but I got the sergeants and chief to eventually agree that the lightbar on top was not visible enough and it needed more lights. I mean, the lightbar was fine, except for when I got close to people. Like if I wanted to pull over a car directly in front of me, I'd have to put some distance between us so they'd be able to see my roof line in their rearview mirror, which was not always practical. The solution was to add a couple blue strobes under the front bumper and also blue strobe lights on the front of the side mirrors, which was a brand new feature then. That helped a lot.





I put a lot of miles on that rig. Hauled a lot of people to jail. Pushed a lot of cars off the road. At some point I salvaged some old round blue lights from an older retired police car and added them into the front grill, because I had plenty of room and I liked police lights. The incandescent bulbs in them were so bright that they made the blue lenses look a little more green than blue, but it was only really noticeable when the other blue strobes were on.

I had that Expedition for 7 whole years. Only got one dent in it when a delivery truck suddenly backed into my front quarter panel above the tire one day and I wasn't fast enough to get out of his way. That was 100% the other guys' fault. It was actually a huge dent, but it got fixed.







The PPD was the only agency in the county to try an Expedition. In all my travels and years on duty, I only saw a couple police Expeditions. Because every other police department knew that if you want a really nice and fully functional police vehicle, you got to go with a make and model that leaves the factory as a purpose-built specifically upgraded and outfitted patrol car.





We were a little behind the learning curve in that regard though, because we decided to then get several Ford Explorers for a few years after that; I think around the year 2005. They were much more utilitarian then the sedans, and the four wheel drive was really nice during inclement weather because we didn't have to fuss around with tire chains in the snow. They weren't the perfect solution, but they were a bit smaller than the giant Expedition, and most cops who drove them really liked how they handled, the size inside, and the size of it on the outside. Most importantly, the seats were higher up than the Crown Vic sedans, which we eventually discovered made a pretty significant difference for the older officers. Getting in and out of a car that's low to the ground could get to be a little much on one's back. Especially when a duty belt is being worn. Eventually pretty much every officer preferred the higher seating arrangement of the Explorers over the Crown Vics, myself included.

The Ford Explorers back in those days, - like the Expedition – were also a bit unusual. In fact, no other police agencies in the county had any. We bought a total of 4, I think. They handled much better in the snow than the sedans did.

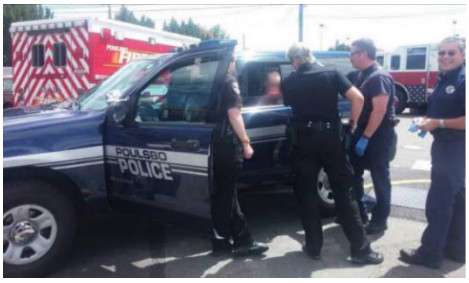












We had some other cars; our detectives over the years drove a variety of plain, unmarked cars. The lineup included a silver Chevy Impala, a green Chevy Lumina, and an old red Buick sedan. The undercover cars were sometimes new ones that had hidden lights installed in the front grill and a police radio under the dashboard. And sometimes we'd take a used car seized from a drug dealer and convert that to our use for a few years.







Speaking of, it was common for bigger police agencies to swap undercover cars with other agencies; if a criminal's seized car was particularly distinctive looking, it was usually just best to remove it from the county where all the other drug users would recognize it, and trade it with another seized car from another police agency a couple counties away.

We also had a special connection with the department of licensing for our undercover cars; we could get them all registered to bogus names and addresses, just in case an enterprising criminal somewhere had a police friend who might innocently run the plate for them. It would not do at all to have our unmarked cars being registered to our police department so instead our plates were registered to fictional entities, like "E.L. Smith, PO Box 55819 Seattle." When I first started back in the early '90's, it was common practice for the special full-time undercover detective to drive cars that had been seized from drug dealers (or traded from other departments) because of course none of those cars looked anything like police cars. Because they weren't. They were all just random cars and they all blended in terrifically well. Each car would get a police radio added to the dash, and some portable blue lights that could kept hidden from view but placed on the front dashboard or magnetically set on the roof as needed. Many years later, the local drug operation undercover detectives convinced the administrative deciders in charge to do away with converting seized cars to department use, and instead just use rental cars. I don't know exactly how they pulled that off but in the end, a contract was signed with a local rental car company to lease out several cars to the officers. The rental car idea was great because the cars were always virtually brand new – most were never more than a year old - and so they all had low miles and never broke down. It also solved a common problem of getting identified by a bad guy. Because once a drug dealer figures out what an undercover police car looks like, that officer and that car were compromised. More than once I head a detective say "Shit I got burned, that guy I was staking out saw me again in this stupid old car!" And word would go out on the street and soon every dealer and user would be able to see that car from a mile away. Rental car solution when getting burned: Go trade the car in and get a completely different one. The rental car company didn't mind at all; hell some officers switched cars out every other week, getting totally different makes and models every time. And of course the undercover cops loved the program, cause, hey – new car! Of course there were no hard-wired radios or lights installed, the officers just used their portable hand-held radios and a magnetic light for the dashboard or roof.



Alright back to me now: my next officially-issued car was a Ford Crown Victoria. Complete with this funky Federal Signal Vector halogen lightbar. It had 7 light bulbs and 7 rotating mirrors. Again; pretty darn slick at the time of manufacture and we all thought it was the wave of the future. Over the years I was issued several different Crown Vics, but they were all pretty much the same. They weren't 4 wheel drive and they were all pretty low to the ground, which eventually caused some minor problems for a few officers - especially the older guys. Getting in and out of a low car 15, 20, 30 times a day can put a strain on one's back, as you might imagine. I was fortunate that for some reason, my spine and back held up well to the cars I drove in, even though the back of my duty belt had two handcuffs and a pepper spray container literally between my waist and seat. A strange feeling at first, but I got used to it.







Another problem with the Crown Vics was that when the trunks were opened during any rain, water would pour off the open lid straight into the trunk and onto whatever gear was stowed in there. Kind of a major design flaw but I guess there was no easy way for the Ford engineers to mitigate that. The Ford Crown Victoria Police Interceptor was manufactured from 1992 to 2011; enough time for well over a million to be manufactured. It was certainly not the most perfect model car, but it was the most widely used and most popular cop car for 10 or 15 years, even though they were not perfect.





The halogen bulb lightbars were replaced with new, strobe bulb models. They were about a 250 % brighter.






When my patrol vehicle needed mechanical work done on, the routine was that I'd borrow one of the spare vehicles we'd keep in stock or use other officers' vehicles if they were on vacation or days off, so it's no exaggeration to say that I drove several dozen different ones over the years. I also on occasion used our departments' various unmarked patrol cars and undercover cars. I drove so many police cars that early on I decided to stop adjusting the driver seats to reach the pedals – since I was the shortest guy on the department and every other officer had their seats pushed further back from the steering wheels I figured it would just be easier for me to adapt to their cars, so I learned to drive with just the tip of my foot on the accelerator and as I got used to it I became comfortable driving that way all the time.

Most of the time our fleet of cars all looked pretty much the same. I remember one night when I was responding to a 911 dispatch from the office; I ran out the back door of the PPD to the parking lot and remotely unlocked my car and jumped into my blue Crown Vic as another officer right behind me unlocked his and got in and then we both stopped in confusion as we realized we had jumped into each other's car by mistake. It actually took me several seconds to process the fact the seat felt a little different and the red map light was a little different, and when I looked over at my partner I could see a look of befuddlement on his face as he was trying to reconcile why "his" car didn't quite seem right either. Actually, that happened more than once.

Like most other police departments, our sergeants got to drive unmarked police cars. Sometimes the cars were completely different colors (like silver or gray) but they always had a full complement of red and blue lights hidden in the grill and on the dashboard and strobes in the corner lights. If you look real close, the spotlight on the car above has a special feature; a back lens that would flash blue, for a bit of extra visibility at night. Optional on/off, of course.




We were fortunate in that each officer got their own assigned car. Some larger departments couldn't afford that many cars so the officers would share; a practice called a "motor pool" that nobody liked, because the cars would all get eventually trashed inside and out and motor pool vehicles never last as long as personally assigned cars, which we had to remind our city council members of several times over the years when they thought they had come up with a great way to try and save money. Now because the vehicles were assigned to us, we got to drive them home and use them for commuting. And the city paid for the gas of course, so having a company car to use was a very nice benefit that we all greatly appreciated.

For a police officer, their patrol car is essentially their office. It was typical for the officers to load up the passenger seat with gear and extra equipment of all kinds, but I usually tried to keep my seat clear for reserve officers or civilian riders that I frequently had. Which made my custom center console in the Ford so handy; I could easily stuff my ticket books and notebooks and jacket in there, but I also usually had some sort of a small organizer thing to hold pens, pens, a ticket book, a camera, a pair of black leather gloves, hand sanitizer, police badge stickers for kids, snacks, a municipal code reference book, extra pens, some water bottles, and other misc. things.

Over the years I tried a variety of different methods to keep all my paperwork organized, sometimes I had actual file bins on the passenger seat for all my paperwork, sometimes I had a file bin in the trunk, I tried a briefcase once, 3 ring binders stuffed here and there other times.. I had to carry a lot of paperwork: impound forms for the tow trucks, three different ticket books (one for infractions, one for criminal citations, and one for parking tickets), resource brochures, the annually updated department master list of every RCW and WAC and PMC crime classification code we might have to use when writing a ticket, and for my first years (pre-internet) I had a standard issue (well, I had to buy it myself) map book called a RoadRunner that showed every single street in the county on about 50 pages, spiral bound. Those were invaluable back then in the days when there were no map screens of any kind in our police cars and GPS navigation hadn't been invented yet.



I kept the trunks stocked with the equipment I needed, or thought I might need. The inventory usually included: a first aid kit, a couple rolls of yellow crime scene barricade tape, several dozen road flares, a couple fire extinguishers, a spare tire and tire jack, an evidence processing kit, large orange traffic cones, a set of tire spike strips, tire traction cable chains, and some other miscellaneous items. In later years as times changed, we all started carrying sharps containers so we could safely dispose of found heroin syringes picked up off the street or found in suspect's clothing, and we got other equipment like ballistic riot helmets, and cardiac defibrillators, and federally-funded gas masks and giant haz-mat suits which we never needed.

The technology in our police cars obviously changed a lot over the years. Take the roof mounted lightbars, for one example. I saw different manufacturers release a lot of different models over the years. The huge bulky light bar housings on the roofs originally had halogen filament light bulbs with rotating mirror reflectors that spun around the bulbs to make them "flash." Technology improved and brought us newer light bars with strobe bulbs, but those drained the battery, burned out easily, and were very stupid expensive to replace – about $80 bucks per bulb. Eventually we wound up with low profile light bars that had low power and super bright LEDs that never burn out. Most lightbars also had a frustrating tendency to leak a bit and let water in, which would cause fogging and condensation inside. It always amazed me that technology was still not advanced yet to make a lightbar that was totally 100% waterproof.

We used to have extra emergency lights mounted behind our engine grills; those were also originally very simple flashing incandescent bulbs behind simple light housings that had red or blue plastic front covers. And none of those lighting systems had any kind of programmable or variable lighting patterns, it was all just a very steady and simple on-off on-off on-off on-off blinking/flashing. Yes, it was kind of lame. I remember when the first strobe light bars started showing up on the state police and county sheriff cars; they were so much brighter and shockingly visible from such a greater distance away.

What else? My first police cars had factory/stock issued rear seats, which easily hid contraband from prisoners; they could just stuff things into the seat cushion cracks to avoid an extra criminal charge or two. Nowadays all police cars have special one-piece back seats that even include spaces for prisoner's handcuffed hands behind them. And unlike the cars we got back in the 80's and 90's, our local mechanic did not have to dissemble the doors to remove the rear door lock linkages.



Most of our cars had radar "guns" which would transmit radar out into traffic to help us catch speeders. Those of course got better over the years; they came smaller, more accurate, had better displays, and the price came down to the point where we had two transmitters antennas in each patrol car; one facing front and one facing back. And then came laser ranging devices which were more accurate and impossible to block or jam with counter-signals. I used my radar enough to calibrate my guestimating skills and so I was always able to see a car going by and be able pretty accurately estimate its speed, without the radar.

I collected a ton of old photos of what some of the police cars looked like back then. I suppose this is as good a place as any to put them. Again, sadly I did not get enough photos of the cars we had when I very first started my career though.
































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As the years went by, our patrol cars got all kinds of new features and upgrades, like the special white flashing opticom lights that we could activate to trip the intersection lights in our favor. To ensure we wouldn't abuse that power, the opticom lights would only come on after we had all our other emergency police lights on, which made it impossible to use surreptitiously. Every officer learned the hard way that it took an extra effort to remember to turn off the opticom light after arriving at the scene of, say, a major car crash because as long as that light was flashing the nearest intersection in sight would be essentially frozen red for cross traffic and invariably after several minutes motorists would start honking their horns and/or calling 911 to report the traffic light was stuck on red and could the officers involved please turn off their opticom lights? It made us feel better though, that sometimes the responding firefighters would also forget about those light and they'd inadvertently leave them on when they were on a scene with us, too. We also learned too that it was very possible for the opticom light to be pointed deliberately away from the nearest intersection but a gas station window or something would reflect and bounce the light back behind us and lock an intersection, messing up all of the traffic. Well, only half the traffic.

And we got spike strips issued to flatten tires on suspect for when we knew a pursuit was coming our way. Outside of the annual training, I never got to deploy my spike strips, which I was okay with me since that was a kind of dangerous endeavor to participate in. And about pursuits: I was only in half a dozen in my career. Most didn't last long and most of the bad guys got away from me, usually because they drove a lot faster and a lot more recklessly than I did. Several of those bad guys were on motorcycles. I can tell you that a determined motorcyclist can outrun and out maneuver a police car of any kind virtually every single time. Eventually I learned it was useless to ever even try and catch a motorcyclist who took off.

And eventually we got laptop computers mounted in our cars, which we called MCTs or Mobile Computer Terminals. They were connected to the dispatch center and so then for the first time we were able to read on a screen the exact details of 911 calls we were being sent to. It was a huge improvement from the old days when as soon as the dispatcher started telling us where to go, we'd have to start scribbling on the nearest piece of paper all the information they were telling us. The MCT's also had maps, which was a terrific thing to have when one forgot where the hell was that road the dispatcher was sending us to.

The MCT's also put a serious damper on all the citizens at home trying to listen in on their old police radio scanners; the amount of information going back and forth between the officers and dispatchers over the air dropped by about 80 percent. By the way, back in those days it was not uncommon for folks to have police scanner radios in their houses, so they could listen in to what their local police were up to. Scanners were pretty expensive though; portable ones were well over a $100 bucks and desk top models could be double or triple that.







For years we used Panasonic Toughbooks for our MCT's, which were originally okay but computer technology being ever-improving, it didn't take long for those things to get outdated and slow and we then tried out more conventional and much, much cheaper Dell laptops, but eventually we relented and went back to official purpose-built Toughbooks. Which cost, along with the specialty mounts, about $6,000 dollars each.

At one point (in the 1990's) we also had LoJack stolen car emergency receivers on some of our cars. That was an anti-theft technology that was one level above regular car alarms. If a car owner wanted to pay about a thousand dollars they'd get a LoJack hidden transmitter installed in their car. The technicians installed them in as many different places as they could so the bad guys would never be able to quickly look for them. Then if and when the car got stolen the owner could call the LoJack company and they'd remotely activate the transmitter. If any police cars nearby had the receivers we could home in on the stolen car. The

technology was pretty crude; the police cars had 4 extra antennas on the roof and a small dash mount display that pretty much showed just an arrow that gave the rough direction of where the car was; it was up to the officer to visually narrow down where exactly the car was. When we had that technology we got only a few hits but nothing close enough to actually catch stolen car passing through.



We had had the mobile computers for several years before all of the GPS capabilities came on line. At first we were quite resistant to the idea of having our police car locations be tracked live by the dispatches and supervisors but we got over it. The MCT's continued to get upgrades over the years with more software programs, including a very nifty hand-held bar code scanner device that could optically laser scan drivers licenses and vehicle registration certificates. When that happened we transitioned from hand-writing traffic tickets to scanning and typing in the data. A small thermal printer mounted between the front seats would print out one copy to issue to our customer and the court copy would be electronically sent to the court. That was a terrific improvement over the old hand writing method.

The Washington State Patrol then digitized their collision report forms, which previously required about an hour to fill out in triplicate by hand and included a couple dozen extra code boxes for weather conditions, road conditions, vehicle defects, driver actions, etc. It became way easier on the MCT, especially being able to scan people's licenses and all their data would automatically be filled in. And the collision diagrams were then computer created instead of hand drawn with little rulers and templates.

With the computers up and running, the officers on patrol were able leave the dispatchers alone and check names and license plates themselves, by accessing state and national databases. Like most of my coworkers I became quite adept at quickly typing on the keyboard with my right hand while using my left hand for driving.

Eventually most of our police cars had to have emergency battery shut-off systems added to solve the problem of our batteries dying while on duty; if a police car was parked too long with the engine off and all the electronics were draining the battery, we'd have to jump-start them with another car and jumper cables to revive it. The battery shut off systems were great; when the battery got close to dying, it would get simply trigger the system to shut everything down to save enough reserve energy to restart the car. Before we had those, I had to manually jump start my one of my patrol cars literally dozens of times over the years.

Needless to say, I spent a lot of time in my police cars, driving around on patrol and idling by the roadside or in parking lots looking around, waiting, watching, and keeping an eye out for bad guys, bad cars, suspicious things, etc. Conservatively speaking, I can saw I put well over a quarter million miles on the odometers during my police career. I liked to drive with my driver's window down so I could hear things better, and usually had the FM radio on to listen to the Seattle news talk shows.

We used to refuel at the city's public works shop where an old gas tank was underground but that got taken out to make way for a new road so we got our gas from then on at the Cenex feed store. I got into the habit of checking my back seat whenever I refueled, since I had clients back there who would occasionally feel a need to empty their pockets of whatever contraband they had hidden. More than once I found little baggies or bindles of drugs jammed into the seat cushions or tossed onto the floor. Sometimes I knew who had put them there, sometimes I had no clue. Even when I did know though, there would never be any way to prove it conclusively enough in a court of law to support a criminal charge, so I never bothered, I just threw it away when it happened.

Okay now we're up to the year 2010. The current chief then decided we should transition from the sedan patrol cars to the larger SUV's, because they 1) were four wheel drive and handled better in the snow and ice and 2) had a lot more room inside and 3) were easier for the officers to get in and out of all time. We chose Chevrolet Tahoes. They looked like this:



Like all the other cars, we only got one or maybe two a year. The police chief usually asked for 3, and the city council would typically only authorize one or two. The first several we got were plain black with simple graphics that I helped design. We also got away from mounting lightbars on the roof – those things were pretty expensive and because they were exposed to the weather they were not in the best shape to be recycled or reused after 7 or 8 years. So we had the lights mounted up in the top of the windshield, on the inside.







Those Chevy Tahoes were pretty good police cars. They had a lot of room in the back seat for prisoners, a ton of room in the very back for equipment and police gear, and they handled beautifully, with excellent acceleration.







The one I got issued was my best police car yet; I loved it. I could get up to 90 mph very quickly and it was very smooth, with no shaking or shuddering or wiggle. And it was very capable in the snow and ice; I never needed tire chains for traction.







It was not uncommon for a new police chief to go for a new look, and changing the color scheme of the patrol cars was the most visible method. So our next chief wanted to try out a black and white look, and the city council signed off on it. We had the doors painted white, and new graphics were made. I was tasked with coming up with the graphic design again, and I presented several proposals and one of them was picked. The officers soon dubbed the look “the orca” and from then on we commonly referred to the Tahoes as Orca Whales.





Speaking of graphics, I saw firsthand a significant evolution of police car graphics. Back in the 1990's when I started, police car lettering was very plain and basic,– everywhere across the country - with just simple block lettering. For example, when I first got into police work in 1993 our cars had very simple and boring pin striping along with a couple catalog-ordered "POLICE" decals for the doors. And that was the standard everywhere back then. Nothing too bold or fancy or large. Over the years it changed, and police car graphics improved considerably.





And then along came computer-controlled vinyl and decal lettering and graphics and so police departments everywhere slowly starting making the designs and colors on their police cars bolder and fancier, although for the first several years after this trend slowly started a lot of agencies were reluctant to make big changes. I mention this only because this was one of the little changes that I saw happen over the years, something that most people don't think about or even really notice.

Eventually, I saw some of the trade and police magazines started having annual contests where sheriff's departments and municipal agencies could show off their new fleet graphics on their cars, and it then became the new norm for police cars to have big colorful graphics and lettering all over them.



We had to keep our cars clean, and so the city council agreed it would be prudent to get us a contract with a local car wash facility. Twenty-four years into my career. So, yeah, I hand washed all of my patrol cars for the first 24 years, at the rate two or three times a month. So whenever I had a citizen or reserve officer riding with me I'd be sure to offer them an opportunity: "Hay! Ya ever wash a police car before?" and most were pretty agreeable to oblige.

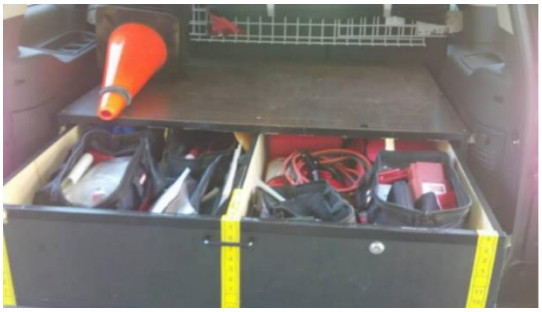
Like the Ford Expedition I once had, my Tahoe had a huge amount of space between the front seats and once again I was able to convince my sergeants to let me build another large center console storage unit between the front seats. I had to work around the mobile computer this time, which took up a lot of valuable real estate. Like my first version, this thing had a ton of room in there for all my loose items and gear. There was one lid that opened under the silver clipboard, and behind the blue clipboard I had another lid that opened into another storage area. On top of that, just barely visible in this picture, I mounted the thermal paper printer.





I also had some room underneath it all for two fire extinguishers, accessible from the passenger side. I wound up never using either one of them, which was ironic since I specifically had two. Because I learned the hard way it really sucks trying to put out a fire and run out of fire extinguisher. Which prompted me to snag a second one. Which I never used. More than one firefighter got pretty excited when I showed them that set up; pictures were taken and notes made.

And in the very back of my patrol Tahoe, since I had a lot of room, I built a giant sized custom drawer thing, using an old desk that had been left behind in the old city hall that was being demolished. It was super heavy but it held all my gear nicely. When I became the K9 Handler and needed more room in the back I gave the thing to another officer, who put gray office carpeting on it, and he kept it for a long time.



Interestingly enough, most of the officers eventually decided they didn't love the Tahoe that much; the speed was governed at 100 mph and they were pretty big vehicles; a little too big to try and maneuver in the police parking garage. Several officers learned the hard way that the concrete support columns in the garage had absolutely no give when bumper pressure was inadvertently applied at various speeds. For the record, I never once bumped into a wall or a column in that garage. The main gate door, yeah..but I was not the only one and it's far harder to hit a moving target like that instead of a huge column..





It took a few years of begging but eventually we got hi-vis rubber bumpers mounted on the corners of some of the more troublesome columns.





Most of our Tahoes started to break down at around 80,000 miles; engine and transmission and electrical problems of all kinds. Mostly because we were doing virtually all city driving and like most cops, we were turning the engines on and off a couple dozen times per shift, and the models we got had not been upgraded enough to withstand the rigors of a lot of stop and go driving constantly.





So…did I ever wreck a police car? Well I never broke one bad enough to retire it, but like most cops who drive a lot for a living, I did do some damage here and there to a few, like the time I quickly turned on a bad guy getting away and I misjudged time, space, and speed and I slammed into a curb too hard, which almost broke the right front tire off completely. (I still managed to catch the bad guy though – AND he went to prison!) And I collected a few dents and scratches and destroyed a couple tires running over random metal debris, and I changed a lot of flat tires, and I got my share of chips and cracks in windshields. I did bump into two – literally just bump, and literally only two – other cars, causing just some minor scratching. I saw a few coworkers over the years who did completely destroy their cars by colliding with other cars or immovable objects, but for the most part I was a pretty good driver and had nothing really major happen to me. Here's a picture of a patrol car that needed some extensive front end repair; the body shop as you can see removed a lot of broken parts. The red thing is a portable battery jump back. And like I said, no this was not my car.



I will readily admit that I did like having the authority to drive fast, legally. Although because Poulsbo was a small town, full speed from one end of town to the other would take only a few minutes, even in full traffic. So it was a welcome change when another officer or deputy out in the county needed some assistance and I could then stomp on the gas and get in a good high speed run lasting 10 or more minutes. But those times were actually pretty rare.

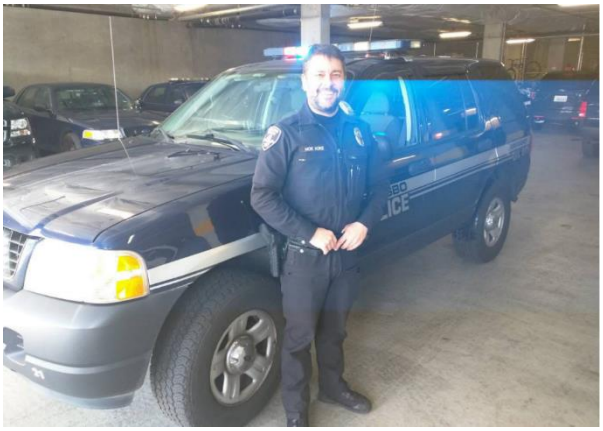
My fastest I ever went was a little under 130 mph, on highway 3 when there were no other cars around. Over the course of my career I was in only a few actual police pursuits and they were usually more than a little scary. I came to conclusion after a few of those that car chases was one of those things I could live without; the risk for crashing into somebody innocent was usually too high for my comfort.

During my career, I figure at some point or another I legally exceeded the speed limit by at least double on virtually every single street and road in Poulsbo while responding to serious emergency calls at all hours of the day and night. I also safely and cautiously went through every single red light possible and blew past probably every single stop sign in town at high speeds; some of them dozens of times. I also did U-turns all the time, everywhere – if I had a map showing every U-turn I ever made in the middle of the roads and intersections over the years, it would pretty much cover every road and street in the entire city. Again, for the record, it was all done safely and I never caused an accident or came close to hitting anything or anyone. Unlike some of my coworkers. I also wish I had a magic map that showed the location of every car I had pulled over; it would be terribly impressive.

In 2016 when I transferred out of the K9 Unit, the officer who took over for me needed the K9 vehicle of course, so he got my Tahoe Orca and I got his (older) Crown Vic. Which at one point had been assigned to me years earlier. Reunited, we looked like this:



My old Crown Vic and I were together less than a year, because when I had the opportunity to "upgrade" to an old Ford Explorer, I jumped at the chance, even though it was older than the sedan. It was better because the seat was higher, giving a better view of traffic and violators, and also easier to get in and out of. The Explorer was ten years old at that time, and had been passed around to several other officers before me. After a couple years with me it was retired and sold at auction, probably for well under a thousand dollars because it was pretty old and worn out by then.





"Waaaait a minute!" I hear you saying. "I thought you guys got new cars every 7 years or so! Why did you get stuck with a car that was 10 years old?!?" Well that's a good point, I'm glad to see you're paying attention here. Yes, our police cars were good for about 7 or 8 years and then they'd get retired. But later on my career, as we got past 2010, the consequences of having frugal bosses (mayors and council members who controlled our budget) had caught up with us in a bad way; we were needing 3 or 4 new replacement vehicles each year but we were getting only one or maybe two. The PPD had about a dozen patrol cars, 3 sergeant cars, two more for the chief and deputy chief and 2 more for the detectives - plus a couple spares kept in strategic reserve to fill in when a regular car broke down or needed service – totaling almost two dozen cars.





So the replacement rate started falling behind and our cars were being kept for 9, 10, 11, and 12 years. Which is really pushing it for a car that gets driven almost daily, and sometimes driven hard in a LOT of stop and go traffic and a lot of engine turning on and off and on and off and on and off. The Explorer I got was definitely past its prime and a step backward. I was actually the 5th officer it had been assigned to. Right after I got it the transmission pretty much blew up; I took it to a repair shop in town and told the mechanic "I have this old Explorer," and before I could even finish he grinned and said "Lemme guess – it's not shifting in third gear." I confirmed it and he consoled me with "It happens to all of them! It's going to take me 19 hours of labor to get it apart, I can put in a refurb tranny, warranty for two years, total price will be a little under thirty eight hundred dollars." The Explorer was not even worth half that but we had no choice but to go ahead and authorize the repair. That was the third Explorer we had that needed either the transmission or the engine replaced. I suspected that the mayor and city council, when presented with another repair bill for $3,800 dollars, probably said "What! How much? Wait, the refurbished transmission is guaranteed for two years? So….that patrol vehicle is good for another two years now? We don't need to replace it with a new car now? Hey! Good job Officer Hoke! Thank you!"







Of course the refurbished transmission never did function perfectly smoothly but it still beat driving a Crown Vic so I kept my complaints to a minimum; in time we got another new chief of police he made it a priority to replace all of the old broken down patrol cars with new ones, and I knew I'd be on the list. Which was why I had volunteered to put myself in one of the oldest cars in our fleet. Although it was an older vehicle, I liked it, took care of it, kept it clean, and took glamour shots of it when it was looking good.





In 2015 we started replacing our old sedans with new Ford patrol cars called "Interceptor/Utility" models. They were really nice because the engineers at Ford designed them from the ground up to meet the specific needs of law enforcement operators; they were easy to get in and out of, the back doors opened extra wide to get handcuffed prisoners in and out, and the ergonomics and layout of everything was very well thought out and designed with more durable seats designed specifically for officers wearing gun belts, etc. The chassis and body was a standard Ford Explorer like the civilian model but there was a long list of modifications and improvements like upgraded springs, shocks, wheels, tires, rotors, alternator and battery, bigger engine, better cooling components, and it was all wheel drive with plenty of torque and acceleration and the handling was superb and those models were best police cars just about ever so far. They were generally regarded by professional cops all over the country as being one of the best police cars ever made.






Nice, yeah? The vast majority of other police agencies replaced their old crown vics with these new rigs:









Here, have some more pictures of old police cars; all with internal combustion gasoline-powered engines under hoods:
































And a couple of undercover/unmarked WSP patrol vehicles, in “On Duty Trooper Only” parking spaces:




POLICE
PORT ORCHARD


U-HAUL
BURIEN
POLICE
BURIEN
POLICE




BREMERTON
POLICE


216.368.3333
CASE WESTERN RESERVE UNIVERSITY
POLICE

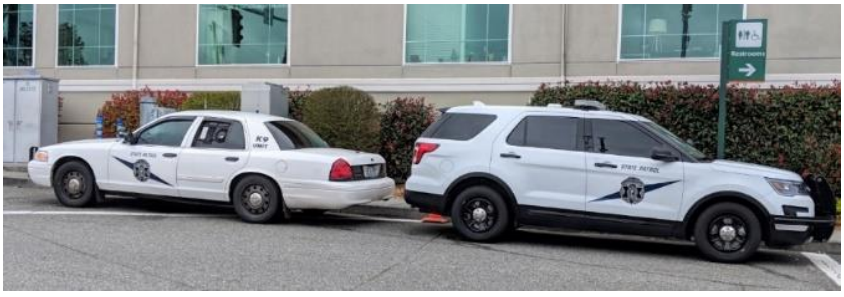

1191
CLEVELAND HEIGHTS
POLICE
SUPERVISOR


TRANSIT
POLICE


GIG HARBOR
POLICE


STATE PATROL


TACOMA
POLICE




POLICE

In 2017 we had a new police chief who got us, finally, a whole of new patrol cars. Nine of them, all at one time!





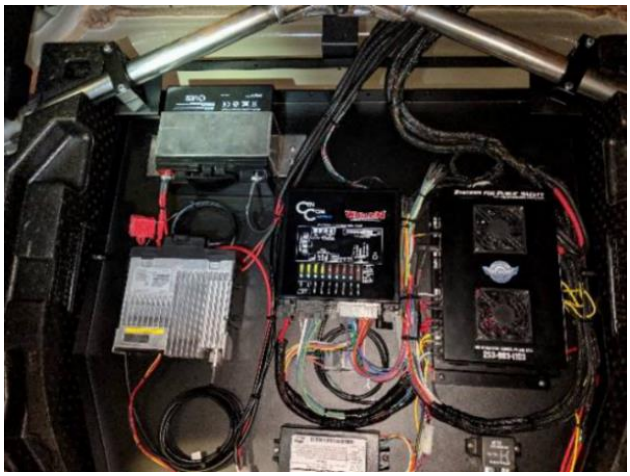


When they arrived, instead of having our local city shop mechanic get them ready for us, we had them prepped at an official and professional cop car outfitting business near Tacoma; it was called Systems for Public Safety. They had the new cars shipped from the car factory and then they added all of the radios and lights and sirens and electronics and front bumper push bars and prisoner partition cage and rifle racks and graphics and everything, all to their customer's specifications. Pretty cool.






Because they outfitted several hundred cars per year they had it down to a fine art, including putting all the electronics in one place – in the back in a special box- and not under the hood where the wiring and fuses and relays would get grimy and dirty. It was a thing of beauty:



Historically, our previously equipped cars had lights and radio and siren wires tapped into existing fuse boxes and also there would be some in-line fuses wired in random places and it was all usually scattered under the hood and in the trunk and trying to diagnose a problem when one inevitably happened was a total nightmare. Plus we had several different city shop mechanics over the years and each one had different ideas and methods about how to best wire in all the new electronics, with varying standards and degrees of success.



These rigs came without a lightbar on the top, because those things cost well over $2,000 dollars. And the lightbars weren't usually salvageable after 7 – 10 years; the plastic housing tended to get really faded from sunlight exposure and it wasn't easy to remove them from a old car and then rewire them into a new car.







I realized right away that my desire to not get into more car chases or pursuits was going to be a lot harder now that I had a very capable patrol car that would be able to easily keep up with any future quarry.



These models had backup cameras; with the screen display in the rearview mirror. Very handy. Controls on the steering wheels, a backup camera, and all kinds of other cool features.













Here's my configuration of all the junk in my trunk; this example of mine is definitely on the "less stuff" scale. Most officers had almost double the amount of gear and equipment; I knew one cop who even carried a whole extra backup uniform, including boots. Most of the other officer's gear was literally all just piled into a big mess of bags and boxes and loose items.



In the upper left hand corner you can see the white round thing? That's the rear-facing radar antenna module; aimed out the back window to measure car speeds from any cars behind me – coming or going. Also present in a black case is an AED, which fortunately I never had to use. And a spike strip is present, but kind of camouflaged here. Also a ballistic SWAT-type helmet, to be used if shit got really serious. I didn't have to get into the back too often, if I did it would be to either get the sharps container to deposit a used syringe somebody found for me, or to get several road flares to block off a lane or two, or to get out the orange traffic cones to divert traffic at accident scenes.

Those rigs were so well designed; the rear lights were visible when the back hatch was wide open:



Below: a year later. Now sporting a super cool less lethal weapon: a single shot 40mm launcher. Normally secured in a carrying case, though.



This concludes this section. I regret not taking more pictures of the old white patrol cars we had back in the early 1990's; very few pictures of those cars were taken and on more than one occasion my coworkers and I were sad about that while trying to reminisce about the old days.


















EMERGENCY VEHICLE OPERATOR'S COURSE

EVOC. A familiar term to any cops anywhere. This training for us was usually once a year, and several different police agencies in the county participated during the event, which lasted several days to accommodate all the officers working all the different shifts. Each department had several officers who were trained and qualified as EVOC instructors.





Our regional EVOC course was at the Bremerton International Airport, which had an old unused airstrip behind the newer airfield. The airstrip was surrounded by woods and had some side roads connected to it.







The instructors would set up several hundred orange traffic cones and taller stanchions to outline lanes and courses, which would either be high speed or low speed. The course layouts would be changed a little every year to keep things interesting.





The high speed courses would stretch about a mile long on the straightaway and in addition to swerving around the cones it would also include high speed chases with instructor officers playing the bad guy role in cars that had been confiscated from drug dealers and converted to police use for thrashing on the track.







The low speed courses had much narrower lanes and we'd drive through them in forward and reverse at normal speed, weaving in and out of cones and backing up and through tight lanes, sometimes with an EVOC instructor in our passenger seat to guide and time us, other times they'd follow in another car and we'd communicate with each other on the police radio, using a training/tactical channel frequency.



Those cone patterns were always easier for the smaller patrol sedans, but even when I had the big giant Ford Expedition I was able to negotiate through all the cone mazes pretty capably. Both the fast and the slower courses were timed, using the instructors' best runs to set a standard. The officers would take turns racing through them and we'd typically be able to shave off to shave 15, 10, or 5 seconds' time off each run.



The officers would take turns racing through them and we'd typically be able to shave off to shave 15, 10, or 5 seconds' time off each subsequent run.





When I first started police work, we did not have tire spike strips; but most police agencies everywhere else didn't have them either. I think we started using them in the early 2000's, and then we practiced deployment tactics regularly, during high speed mock pursuits. The instructors would speed around the course in whatever car that had been seized from a drug dealer lately and we'd give chase with lights and sirens. One year they surprised us by stopping mid-course and while we practiced our felony stop procedures on them they suddenly jumped out of the car and started shooting airsoft rifles in our direction, which caught most of us off guard because they had never done that before and we weren't used to taking fire like that. "That'll teach you all to not stop so close behind a bad guy after a chase!" they admonished us.





All of the mock pursuits included a part where one of the officers would drop out of the chase and go set up a tire spiking area somewhere, and when the "bad guys" got to that area, the tire spike set would be thrown out across the road and the tires would be spiked. Actually, it was a training spike strip set with nothing actually pointy in it, so no real tires were harmed during the trainings. It was mostly just to teach all the officers about how to throw the things out and communicate with the other chasing officers about what was going on. Which was important, because occasionally during actual real chases out in the county some officer would deploy the spike strip and the get the bad guy and then the next police car or two in the chase would also run over it. When the bad guy blew out all his tires that was good; when the police cars lost their tires, that was bad. So it was pretty important to coordinate and communicate about when and where the spikes were being deployed, and most importantly, when they were then yanked back off the road hopefully after the bad guy just ran them over.





Our tire spike stripes were called Stop Sticks, because that was the brand name. They were a three- part folded up plastic thing that has hollow spikes inside and there's a rope and handle and in a best case scenario an officer up ahead of a pursuit can lay the thing out by the side of the road, run across the road with the string, and when the bad guy car approaches at whatever speed, the officer can use the string to pull the tire spike set up across and into the roadway just in time to hit the tires. We practiced that a lot. Like I said, we used an inert training model that was identical to the real ones, but with no actual spikes inside because, well, tires are expensive. One time, when it was my turn to deploy the stop stick during a mock pursuit I had the training model in my car but in the heat of the excitement I grabbed my real one from my trunk and threw that out into the road, oblivious to my colossal mistake but fortunately one of the instructors supervising me called a time out on over the radio's training frequency and managed to stop everybody on the course before they got to me. I think he didn't know if he wanted to yell at me or just laugh. I actually felt pretty good about that; it was a fast stressful situation and I didn't hesitate for a second to just brag the official real spike strip from my trunk and deploy it.

I never wound up actually using the spike strips on a real life bad guy car. But I knew plenty of other officers who did. Sometimes they were successful in throwing the spikes out at just the right time and place and they were able to deflate some tires. Sometimes they'd also deflate the tires on the chasing police cars; one of my coworkers spiked a sheriff's deputy and got all four the tires on his crown vic; required three other guys to get out their spare tires so he could get his car back in service. Not surprisingly, the Sheriff sent the bill for 4 new tires to our police chief, who was not super thrilled about that.





And then eventually we were taught the PIT maneuver training; also a new thing for us. That's the pursuit-ending tactic of using a police car to ram a fleeing suspect car and knock them out sideways. When we started to learn that it was great fun, and it became an essential part of our training every year. We had some of our old retired patrol cars modified with guards to protect the bodies; they looked like this:





Practicing PIT maneuver training was a blast: one officer and an EVOC instructor would get in one of the cars and maintain a steady speed in a straight line. Another car with an officer and another EVOC instructor would come up alongside and behind it, match the speed, and then basically nudge or shove the front corner of their car into the back quarter panel area of the "suspect." Done right, the car in front would spin out and come to a stop for a few seconds, at which point other officers could zoom in and block in the suspect with their cars.

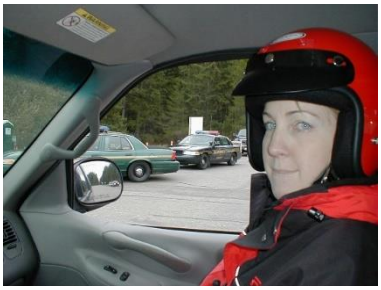




The whole process is actually a bit violent, with the bumping and controlled crashing and tires squealing and scuffing sideways, making quite a bit of rubber smoke and smell everywhere. Like all EVOC training, this part definitely required helmets to be worn by everybody since the jostling and bumping could be rather significant.











And sometimes the instructors would bring out a special skid car set up, which was a 4 wheel mechanical dolly rig that went under a training car. It could hydraulically lift the car tires off the road a little or a lot in any combination to reduce the tire's surface area contact. When the tires were lifted almost all the way off the ground the traction went to just about zero and that would of course cause different kinds of skidding that we'd have to learn how to recover from.

The EVOC instructor had a control panel in the passenger seat and he could adjust the thing to lift the front end of the car up on the fly, so to speak. Or the back end. Or both. Usually the officer driving would not know which was going to happen until it was time to start turning and things went literally sideways fast. Not only was that terrifically fun training but it also programmed us how to quickly react to skidding without wasting time panicking first or thinking about which tires were losing traction and how to recover an out of control car.



Sometimes we did our EVOC driving training in the dark and sometimes in the winter and if it happened to be snowing at that time, oh well that's all the better.





I remember once hitting the course in my 2000 Ford Expedition when there was a good two inches of icy snowy slush coating the entire course, and I got to drive as fast as I could, which rewarded me with giant solid waves of thick slush getting thrown up several feet out from the front wheels.



Another time one of the instructors - who happened to be an older and very experienced PPD officer – drove off the road at a high speed, caught some gravel, and he lost control so much he rolled his car over. It was his first accident ever and it couldn't have happened to a nicer patrol car; he had literally the best one in the fleet. He was uninjured but the car was completely ruined. We named that stretch of the course in his honor after that; "Brubaker Boulevard." He of course got a lot of ribbing from everybody for years afterward, especially since he had always bragged about never being in an accident and couldn't understand how or why an officer could let that happen to them.





Considering I went to EVOC courses about two dozen times you'd think I have a lot more (and better) pictures, but I only bothered to snap some photos just a few times.





For what it's worth though, I know I took more pictures than anybody else.





Okay good news! This ends the part about police cars.





BICYCLE PATROL

Concurrent to my DARE and SRO assignments I took an urban police bicycle patrol course with a group of Washington State Police troopers on bikes to become a certified bicycle patrol officer. It was several days long.





Yep. Put me in a line up with a bunch of state troopers and I'll always be the shortest one.





I did bike patrol mostly for special events; the most important one was when the King and Queen of Norway came to town in 1995; escorted by a large phalanx of state police motorcycles. The motorcade came flying into town at double the speed limit, literally running me off the road on my bicycle. Check out that old Suburban used by their security detail - I wish I had taken some better pictures of that for our amusement now!





As a bike officer, I participated in a lot of "bike rodeos" for kids – which looked a lot like traffic cones in parking lots to make a little skills course for kids to ride their bikes and practice hand signs and riding while being alert, and how to wear helmets correctly, etc. and I made sure a lot of helmets were snug on a lot of little heads.

I don't have any good bicycle patrol stories.






Just a few pictures, to prove I was there and did it.




Here's me with one of the 6 police chiefs I worked for. And Ben Shepard, the bass player for Soundgarden:








BOAT PATROL

I was also a state certified marine patrol police boat operator for a few years. In the late 1990's when we got a new police boat to replace a much older and smaller model, somebody convinced me to join our department's small cadre of boating patrol officers. So I went to a boat training school in Eastern Washington and learned how to operate our boat competently.

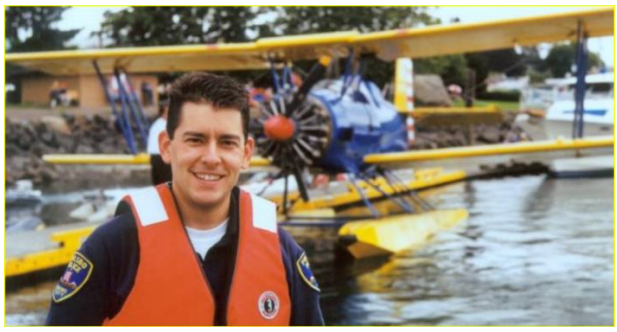



Part of the training included going to a swimming pool and learning just how life saving the inflatable life jackets could be, which is pretty crucial since police officers on boats still patrol with their heavy gun belts and Kevlar vests on. So one at a time the student officers had to put on a heavy lead weight dive belt and jump into the pool (in swim shorts only, not with our uniforms!) and once on the bottom we pulled the cord to inflate the life jacket to float us back up to the surface. They worked great. For better or worse I don't have any good boating stories to share, just a few pictures.






Fortunately I never had any incidents on the boat. Andy and John did, though; they went out on the boat one evening and turned too hard and caught a wave wrong; the resulting slam and shudder on the hull was enough to launch Andy right off the boat into the water. John was able to figure out how to turn the boat around in time to fish Andy out of the water, who learned the hard way why life jackets are a good idea when one is trying to stay afloat with a full uniform on, including boots. Of course his portable police radio and cell phone were ruined; everything else was able to be rinsed off and salvaged. In that their boat patrolling was more like a joyride, the Chief was quite less than amused and a couple of stern disciplinary letters were issued and filed in their records.


Again, nothing exciting happened while I did my boat patrols, so we only have one page for this part.

D.A.R.E.

Drug Abuse Resistance Education. A popular national program designed to educate kids about the dangers of drugs; taught by police officers in school classrooms.

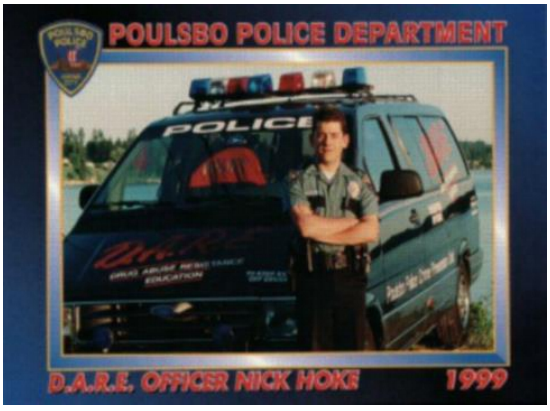
From 1995 to 2000 I was a DARE Officer. The DARE program had been invented and implemented starting in Los Angeles in 1983, and it became a nationwide program about 10 years later, present in almost a majority of school districts and police departments. By the early '90's all of the police departments in our county had a DARE Officer; a patrol officer assigned to a specialty assignment of youth drug education. Even though I had not yet met the minimum time in service for being a police officer, I was given a waiver and accepted into the Washington State DARE Officer Instructor program. And after my successful completion of that course I was state certified to go into classrooms and teach students about the dangers of drugs. Here's me at the training, front and center.



The Drug Abuse Resistance and Education program kept me busy for five years. I taught the 17-lesson curriculum to the local 5th and 6th graders at three elementary schools. 17 lessons to about 46 different classrooms of kids. The grand total of students I taught was a little over 1,300. Scheduling several different classes in multiple schools on the same days was always a challenge and doing the high-energy classroom presentations were usually pretty mentally demanding. It gave me a pretty good appreciation for the jobs that school teachers have to do. When the teachers got familiar with me and saw that I could handle the class on my own for an hour or so they'd sometimes leave me alone with the kids, which was usually rewarding. I took pride in learning how to keep the students focused for long periods of time using a variety of techniques, most self-taught. And over the years I became acquainted with most of the teachers and principals and staff in the local schools and at the school district administrative buildings.

As a DARE Officer I got assigned a special DARE vehicle, which in my case turned out to be a not-really-so-special used Ford minivan that a car dealer had donated to us. In the bigger police departments the first DARE vehicles were fancy cars like Camaros or Corvettes or Hummers that had been seized from drug dealers and converted to department use. Not every department could get flashy cars though so a trend was started to give "different" (non-police) vehicles to the DARE programs, or they would just take old police cars and put colorful graphics all over them to make them look different. Anyway the best my department could do was to get an old donated black and gray Aerostar minivan. To make it look a little better I got a local car stereo shop to donate red and blue neon tubes under it. I never saw any other police or DARE cars with neon lights (probably because they broke pretty easily) but for a while I had the only vehicle around that could legally operate on the roads with neon tubes on underneath. Since I could call them "emergency lights" I could use them when I was pulling people over.

My official police trading card from that era:





Also to make up for the fact that I was driving a stock minivan (which did elicit never-ending derisive snickers from just about other police officer who ever saw it) I had a giant POLICE decal put on the front of the windshield, and I added blue lights to the front grille. Unfortunately though a lot of officers considered my DARE assignment as nothing like "real" police work so I had to make it a point to do continue to do regular traffic enforcement in my minivan. I also responded to more than my share of car accident investigations and also took other regular police calls frequently. It kept my patrol skills sharp and although I got some teasing for being a "kiddie cop" I think most of my coworkers eventually concluded that I was still doing important work. Although they couldn't resist teasing me for patrolling in a minivan. During the summers I'd lose my day shift hours and get transferred to a late evening or even night shift patrol, which was fair since I had a coveted day shift for 8 months out of the year even though I was still a very junior officer.





Back in those days the economy was very strong and the DARE program was funded very well. I got to go to annual training conferences for DARE Officers throughout the state. Because the whole DARE program was centered toward kids, the DARE Officers' spouses and families were encouraged to attend, too. The conferences were always in larger cities, with training classes, motivational speakers, and an afternoon set aside for picnics at the local water parks and a big public parade with all the different DARE vehicles. The conferences were a great time to recharge my batteries so to speak, by hanging out with other DARE Officers and instructors.

One time an instructor, who was not a cop but a civilian, was talking about something I can't remember and he explained that he had a very special permit issued from the Drug Enforcement Agency that allowed him to actually buy illegal street drugs at anytime, anywhere, from anybody. The permit didn't give him permission to use the drugs of course; he could only buy them. He used this privilege to show off: At every class he ever taught, no matter what city he was in, he was able to go find a drug dealer somewhere nearby while on his lunch break and when the afternoon class started again he'd report on his success.

I remember another time at one of the conferences, there was a large banquet dinner at the hosting hotel. A guest speaker came out and entertained us in an epic manner. He was an older guy, about 60 years old with gray hair and mustache, a little heavy, and he was introduced as a high-ranking police detective from Scotland Yard, the main headquarters for the British metro police in London. I actually can't remember what he was talking about but I do remember that it started out normal sounding but after 5 or 10 minutes he started going off the rails and his speech devolved slowly into complete crazy talk that eventually had everybody in attendance staring wide-eyed at him in shock and growing disbelief because he started saying some pretty unbelievable things. When it became clear to him that he was losing the majority of us with his ever-growing outlandish stories, he stopped and apologized. And with a huge grin he suddenly lost his accent and explained "I'm not British. I'm not a police detective. I actually am the manager at the Walla Walla airport. But I have a side job where I pretend to impersonate other people at conferences of all kinds." Everybody in the audience started to relax again and laugh as he explained that he does this sort of thing all the time. For the first half of his presentations he would pretend to be somebody he's not and see how outrageous he could get, then for the second half he'd fess up and entertain everybody with stories of his past hilarious performances.

He told us about the time he got invited to an obstetrician's medical conference. (Of course the people who invite him knows full well he's going to do a hilarious BS presentation, and they're the only ones who ever knows beforehand. It also helps when the local hosts introduce him with whatever bullshit title he has come up with, to establish credibility right away) So he told us that at the doctor's conference, on his way up to the stage he grabbed a metal pole stanchion that was used to hold up a roped off area. He got on the stage and adopted an Australian accent, and he told all the doctors about how the new thing in Australia is the "birthing pole" which he showed off. "The woman in labor will squat in front of this pole here, grab onto it, and push the baby out," he explained in his fake accent. He went on in great detail about the state of obstetrics in Australia and about how the birthing pole was a big hit. As usual, this guy's got his speech crazier and crazier and when more than few doctors started looking at each other with incredulous looks, and he could see that he was started to lose most of them, he fessed up and brought relief to everybody who were as a whole getting pretty concerned about the progress of medical science in Australia. Another time, he was invited to a conference made up of high ranking naval officers at the Bangor Sub base. He pretended to be an admiral from the Norwegian Navy, and he started describing the new technology the Norwegian Navy was using on their new secret submarines. This guy said he could clearly see some of the US Navy admirals turning to their aides, demanding in furious whispers how they had not seen any intelligence briefings on all that. God that guy was super entertaining.





At the conferences, because most of the DARE Officers brought their families and their cool cars, it was a tradition to have a procession to the weekend picnic. For the parade staging all the DARE police cars would line up and then turn on all their emergency lights and flashers.





There were a lot of converted police or patrol vehicles, others were sports cars seized from drug dealers. There were sport utility vehicles, pickup trucks, a few other minivans, and station wagons. For you visual learners, I present these vintage photos:





During the parade we'd all cycle through our different siren sounds. Can you imagine several dozen police cars, all with different tones of sirens wailing and blaring completely out of sync with each other? The local police hosting agency would block intersections off for us as we went through the town and it absolutely always attracted a ton of attention; people would pour out of business and houses and wave and we'd all wave back. Invariably the routes would also include a side detour into at least one bad part of town to freak out the local drug dealers who of course would completely panic, hearing several dozen police sirens getting louder and closer to them. We just knew large quantities of drugs were getting frantically flushed down toilets in complete panic, and then we've drive by, smiling and waving with our lights and sirens going and most of the drug dealers and drugs users would just stand there on their porches trying to act casual while being completely befuddled by the whole scene while we headed to our picnic.

See the cute Volkswagen Beetle there? That was a pretty unique design; a new car dealership in Bellevue had loaned the car to the Bellevue Police DARE unit. Then somebody submitted some pictures of it to the Matchbox toy car company for consideration in their special release DARE car collection. The Bellevue Beetle was chosen as one of 6 nationwide winners, and Matchbox released a couple little versions of it over the couple years. They looked like this:





While I was our department's DARE Officer, I also became our Crime Prevention Officer, which meant I wound up giving a lot of police station tours to youth groups of all kinds and ages, and crime prevention presentations to neighborhood watch groups, homeowners associations, and community and civic groups. I also did robbery prevention presentations to the local banks at their early morning meetings. I became adept and comfortable at public speaking, and I prepared and presented talks for groups of people in every age range and demographic including crime prevention talks for civic clubs and presentations to classes of students in every single grade, from pre-school through elementary, middle schoolers, high schoolers, college classes, and police reserve academy courses.



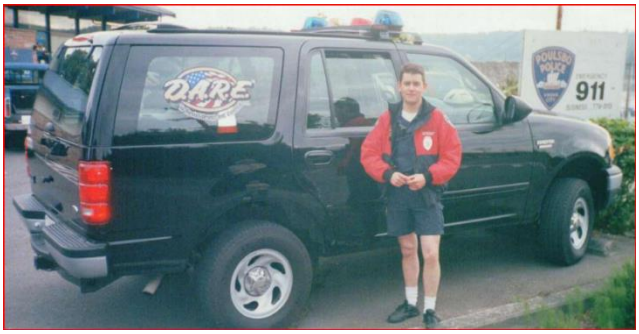
Several times I addressed the entire student bodies at the elementary school, junior high, or high school during special events in their gyms or auditoriums. And every other year or so the local fire department would host a simulated car crash scene on the football field so the teens could see a graphic representation of what a drunk driving crash could look like. We'd get tow truck companies to bring out a couple of wrecked cars and we'd put some actors in there – teens in formal wear that we splattered fake blood on. It usually included one kid "dying" and getting carried away under a sheet, and another kid getting "arrested" for drunk driving. Police cars and fire trucks and ambulances would show up, lights and sirens on. Sometimes we could get a medical airlift helicopter to show up from Seattle to simulate an emergency transport to Seattle's Harborview hospital trauma center. Two or three times I narrated the event with a microphone. The whole thing usually made most of the teachers and adults watching get all emotional and the whole crowd of 1,500+ kids always watched in respectful silence. I was always nervous about getting heckled because in the audience I was well aware there were at least a dozen real troublemakers whom I had arrested for various offenses, whom I know just hated me. But to my relief every time, I had a perfect record of finishing every presentation without ever being interrupted. Here's me educating one of the elementary schools:





Because DARE Officers got to drive differently marked police cars it was not too crazy of a request for me to also get a special red DARE jacket. To make it look official I had a reflective cloth badge sewn onto the front and a large silver "POLICE" silkscreened on the back, and I added shoulder patches on the sleeves.





I wore it a lot and was quite amused once when it got a fire department lieutenant completely bent out of shape when he saw me wearing it at the county fair when I was there on official business. He approached me and asked me to please not wear it because red was a fire department color as everybody knows and police were supposed to wear blue, not ever red. I politely declined and he then desperately resorted to bribery, offering to pay me cash on the spot so he could get it away from me. I smiled and said no thank you and he stormed away quite frustrated. That still cracks me up when I think about it.

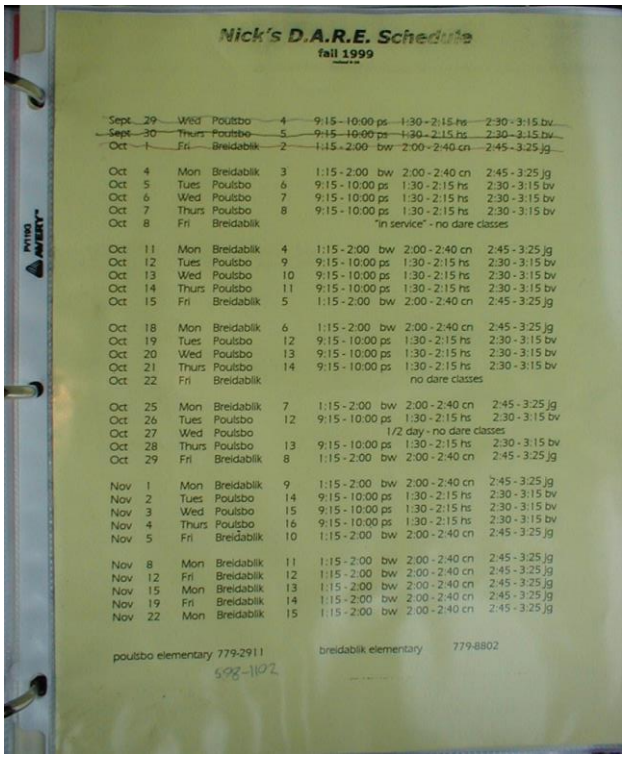
For the rest of my police career I would occasionally run into former DARE students, and/or their parents. As the years went by they got older (of course) and eventually some started balding in middle age, which always startled me a little bit when a bald man told me "Hey you were my DARE Officer twenty years ago!" One of my former DARE students grew up to become a lawyer, and work for the law firm that contracted with our municipal court to provide public defender services. Whenever I ran into him in court I'd good naturedly tell him "You know your clients are all guilty, right? You should just tell them all to plead guilty and save us a lot of time, yeah?"

And yes, there were also about a dozen or so former students that I eventually wound up arresting for drug or alcohol issues. I almost never remembered them but they'd bring it up to me first. "Hey you used to be my DARE Officer in 5th grade.." And then I'd have to say something like "Well I guess maybe you should have paid more attention to what I was trying to share with you back then."

The DARE curriculum for each class was about 3 months long, and I'd conclude it with a big graduation ceremony for the students. The ceremony would be in the gym or the school auditorium, with 3 or 4 classrooms of the 5th and 6th graders and their parents in attendance. To graduate, each student had to write an essay about drugs and what they'd learned. The best essay from each class was read out loud by the winning student during the ceremony; it was not uncommon to hear a kid describe their family's personal challenges with drugs as being an influencing factor in those kids' attitudes against drugs. Then each kid got their name read out loud and they came on the stage to get a certificate and shake hands with the police chief and school district Superintendent and they all got black or red or white DARE t shirts beforehand and then it finished with cake and drinks. Every ceremony also included a couple hundred helium balloons for decoration; usually I had to prepare those myself. I am real good at quickly tying off helium balloons in quantity now. There were also DARE bumper stickers; it was cool to see some of those on local cars, and some of the kids proudly kept wearing their DARE t-shirts even throughout high school.

Tragically though, back in those years the D.A.R.E. curriculum did not address what was going to be the biggest drug scourge to come yet: prescription pill overuse. Specifically; opiate drugs like OxyContin and oxycodone that led to so many people getting addicted to heroin later. In the 1980's and 1990's everybody was still focused on cocaine, and then crack cocaine and then methamphetamine. Absolutely nobody saw the tragedy of the coming pharmaceutical opioid epidemic looming in the future, followed by heroin, of all things.

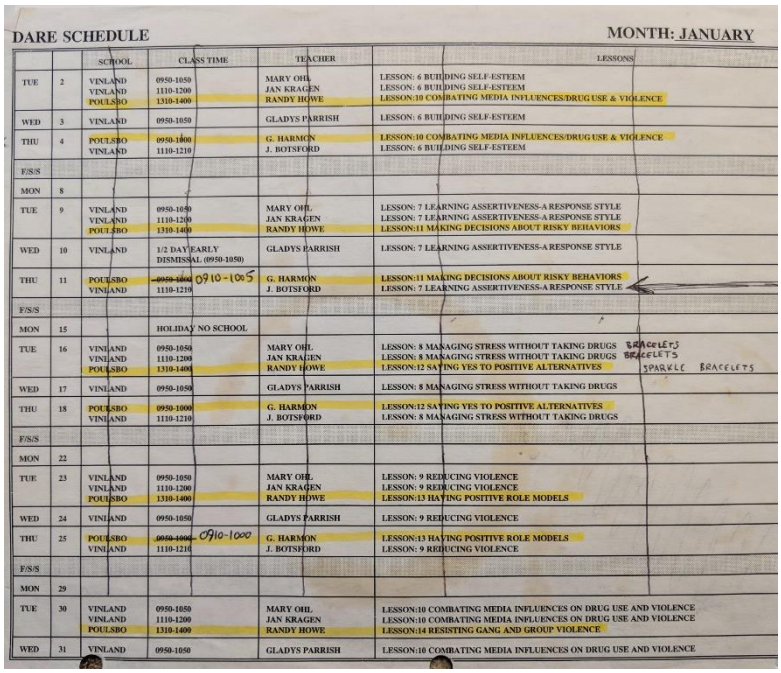
Here's a sample page of my schedule from one year; only two schools then; the third one had me show up in the spring. Some years I had all three schools going at one time; my schedule was crazy then!



Nick's D.A.R.E. Schedule
fall 1999

Sept	29	Wed	Poulsbo	4	9:15 - 10:00 ps	1:30 - 2:15 hs	2:30 - 3:15 bv
Sept	30	Thurs	Poulsbo	5	9:15 - 10:00 ps	1:30 - 2:15 hs	2:30 - 3:15 bv
Oct	1	Fri	Breidablik	2	1:15 - 2:00 bw	2:00 - 2:40 cn	2:45 - 3:25 jg
Oct	4	Mon	Breidablik	3	1:15 - 2:00 bw	2:00 - 2:40 cn	2:45 - 3:25 jg
Oct	5	Tues	Poulsbo	6	9:15 - 10:00 ps	1:30 - 2:15 hs	2:30 - 3:15 bv
Oct	6	Wed	Poulsbo	7	9:15 - 10:00 ps	1:30 - 2:15 hs	2:30 - 3:15 bv
Oct	7	Thurs	Poulsbo	8	9:15 - 10:00 ps	1:30 - 2:15 hs	2:30 - 3:15 bv
Oct	8	Fri	Breidablik		"in service" - no dare classes		
Oct	11	Mon	Breidablik	4	1:15 - 2:00 bw	2:00 - 2:40 cn	2:45 - 3:25 jg
Oct	12	Tues	Poulsbo	9	9:15 - 10:00 ps	1:30 - 2:15 hs	2:30 - 3:15 bv
Oct	13	Wed	Poulsbo	10	9:15 - 10:00 ps	1:30 - 2:15 hs	2:30 - 3:15 bv
Oct	14	Thurs	Poulsbo	11	9:15 - 10:00 ps	1:30 - 2:15 hs	2:30 - 3:15 bv
Oct	15	Fri	Breidablik	5	1:15 - 2:00 bw	2:00 - 2:40 cn	2:45 - 3:25 jg
Oct	18	Mon	Breidablik	6	1:15 - 2:00 bw	2:00 - 2:40 cn	2:45 - 3:25 jg
Oct	19	Tues	Poulsbo	12	9:15 - 10:00 ps	1:30 - 2:15 hs	2:30 - 3:15 bv
Oct	20	Wed	Poulsbo	13	9:15 - 10:00 ps	1:30 - 2:15 hs	2:30 - 3:15 bv
Oct	21	Thurs	Poulsbo	14	9:15 - 10:00 ps	1:30 - 2:15 hs	2:30 - 3:15 bv
Oct	22	Fri	Breidablik		no dare classes		
Oct	25	Mon	Breidablik	7	1:15 - 2:00 bw	2:00 - 2:40 cn	2:45 - 3:25 jg
Oct	26	Tues	Poulsbo	12	9:15 - 10:00 ps	1:30 - 2:15 hs	2:30 - 3:15 bv
Oct	27	Wed	Poulsbo		1/2 day - no dare classes		
Oct	28	Thurs	Poulsbo	13	9:15 - 10:00 ps	1:30 - 2:15 hs	2:30 - 3:15 bv
Oct	29	Fri	Breidablik	8	1:15 - 2:00 bw	2:00 - 2:40 cn	2:45 - 3:25 jg
Nov	1	Mon	Breidablik	9	1:15 - 2:00 bw	2:00 - 2:40 cn	2:45 - 3:25 jg
Nov	2	Tues	Poulsbo	14	9:15 - 10:00 ps	1:30 - 2:15 hs	2:30 - 3:15 bv
Nov	3	Wed	Poulsbo	15	9:15 - 10:00 ps	1:30 - 2:15 hs	2:30 - 3:15 bv
Nov	4	Thurs	Poulsbo	16	9:15 - 10:00 ps	1:30 - 2:15 hs	2:30 - 3:15 bv
Nov	5	Fri	Breidablik	10	1:15 - 2:00 bw	2:00 - 2:40 cn	2:45 - 3:25 jg
Nov	8	Mon	Breidablik	11	1:15 - 2:00 bw	2:00 - 2:40 cn	2:45 - 3:25 jg
Nov	12	Fri	Breidablik	12	1:15 - 2:00 bw	2:00 - 2:40 cn	2:45 - 3:25 jg
Nov	15	Mon	Breidablik	13	1:15 - 2:00 bw	2:00 - 2:40 cn	2:45 - 3:25 jg
Nov	19	Fri	Breidablik	14	1:15 - 2:00 bw	2:00 - 2:40 cn	2:45 - 3:25 jg
Nov	22	Mon	Breidablik	15	1:15 - 2:00 bw	2:00 - 2:40 cn	2:45 - 3:25 jg

poulsbo elementary 779-2911 breidablik elementary 779-8802



DARE SCHEDULE MONTH: JANUARY

		SCHOOL	CLASS TIME	TEACHER	LESSONS
TUE	2	VINLAND	0950-1050	MARY OHL	LESSON: 6 BUILDING SELF-ESTEEM
		VINLAND	1110-1200	JAN KRAGEN	LESSON: 6 BUILDING SELF-ESTEEM
		POULSBO	1310-1400	RANDY HOWE	LESSON:10 COMBATING MEDIA INFLUENCES/DRUG USE & VIOLENCE
WED	3	VINLAND	0950-1050	GLADYS PARRISH	LESSON: 6 BUILDING SELF-ESTEEM
THU	4	POULSBO	0950-1000	G. HARMON	LESSON:10 COMBATING MEDIA INFLUENCES/DRUG USE & VIOLENCE
		VINLAND	1110-1210	J. BOTSFORD	LESSON: 6 BUILDING SELF-ESTEEM
F/S/S					
MON	8				
TUE	9	VINLAND	0950-1050	MARY OHL	LESSON: 7 LEARNING ASSERTIVENESS-A RESPONSE STYLE
		VINLAND	1110-1200	JAN KRAGEN	LESSON: 7 LEARNING ASSERTIVENESS-A RESPONSE STYLE
		POULSBO	1310-1400	RANDY HOWE	LESSON:11 MAKING DECISIONS ABOUT RISKY BEHAVIORS
WED	10	VINLAND	1/2 DAY EARLY DISMISSAL (0950-1050)	GLADYS PARRISH	LESSON: 7 LEARNING ASSERTIVENESS-A RESPONSE STYLE
THU	11	POULSBO	~~0950-1000~~ 0910-1005	G. HARMON	LESSON:11 MAKING DECISIONS ABOUT RISKY BEHAVIORS
		VINLAND	1110-1210	J. BOTSFORD	LESSON: 7 LEARNING ASSERTIVENESS-A RESPONSE STYLE
F/S/S					
MON	15		HOLIDAY NO SCHOOL		
TUE	16	VINLAND	0950-1050	MARY OHL	LESSON: 8 MANAGING STRESS WITHOUT TAKING DRUGS BRACELETS
		VINLAND	1110-1200	JAN KRAGEN	LESSON: 8 MANAGING STRESS WITHOUT TAKING DRUGS BRACELETS
		POULSBO	1310-1400	RANDY HOWE	LESSON:12 SAYING YES TO POSITIVE ALTERNATIVES SPARKLE BRACELETS
WED	17	VINLAND	0950-1050	GLADYS PARRISH	LESSON: 8 MANAGING STRESS WITHOUT TAKING DRUGS
THU	18	POULSBO	0950-1000	G. HARMON	LESSON:12 SAYING YES TO POSITIVE ALTERNATIVES
		VINLAND	1110-1210	J. BOTSFORD	LESSON: 8 MANAGING STRESS WITHOUT TAKING DRUGS
F/S/S					
MON	22				
TUE	23	VINLAND	0950-1050	MARY OHL	LESSON: 9 REDUCING VIOLENCE
		VINLAND	1110-1200	JAN KRAGEN	LESSON: 9 REDUCING VIOLENCE
		POULSBO	1310-1400	RANDY HOWE	LESSON:13 HAVING POSITIVE ROLE MODELS
WED	24	VINLAND	0950-1050	GLADYS PARRISH	LESSON: 9 REDUCING VIOLENCE
THU	25	POULSBO	~~0950-1000~~ 0910-1000	G. HARMON	LESSON:13 HAVING POSITIVE ROLE MODELS
		VINLAND	1110-1210	J. BOTSFORD	LESSON: 9 REDUCING VIOLENCE
F/S/S					
MON	29				
TUE	30	VINLAND	0950-1050	MARY OHL	LESSON:10 COMBATING MEDIA INFLUENCES ON DRUG USE AND VIOLENCE
		VINLAND	1110-1200	JAN KRAGEN	LESSON:10 COMBATING MEDIA INFLUENCES ON DRUG USE AND VIOLENCE
		POULSBO	1310-1400	RANDY HOWE	LESSON:14 RESISTING GANG AND GROUP VIOLENCE
WED	31	VINLAND	0950-1050	GLADYS PARRISH	LESSON:10 COMBATING MEDIA INFLUENCES ON DRUG USE AND VIOLENCE

SCHOOLS

Wednesday, April 29, 1998 ● North Kitsap Herald

Celebrating DARE Week in NK

By DIANE DUMELLE
Staff Writer

Monday morning, fifth- and sixth-grade students at Poulsbo Elementary School wrapped their school in red ribbon to signify it as a drug-free and violence-free zone.

The 200 students who graduated from the DARE program late last year passed the ribbon to each other along the outside building walls. Special guests Poulsbo Mayor "Mitch" Michinson, DARE officer Nick Hoke and Police Chief Jeff Doran stapled it to the side of the building.

Following the wrapping, Poulsbo Elementary principal Linda Hughes addressed all 625 students in an outdoor assembly at the flagpole.

"This is an exciting week," she said. "The red ribbon is a sign that everyone inside is drug free."

This community cares about being drug free, and the activities are to help understand the importance of being drug free, Hughes said. The DARE bracelets each student wore were made from medical bracelets donated by Harrison Memorial Hospital say "you can count on me; I'm drug and violence free and I'll help make my community that way."

Completing the assembly, officer Hoke recited A Drug-Free Pledge for Poulsbo Elementary Students that he wrote, with the students echoing the words:

My name is ____ and I want to make a pledge:

I want to keep my body and mind healthy; I will stay away from illegal drugs.

I know that smoking cigarettes is very unhealthy. I know I shouldn't drink alcohol until I'm at least 21. I know that illegal drugs hurt people.

I know that if a friend is abusing drugs, they need help. To help them, I have to tell an adult, because the problem will not go away unless somebody helps them. I'll talk to a teacher, a counselor, a police officer, or a parent.

Kids who use drugs hurt themselves, and hurt their friends and families.

Kids Who Use Are Kids Who Lose!

Drug Free is the Way to Be!

Barb Wiprud, whose fifth grade son attends the school, introduced the red ribbon wrapping idea to Poulsbo Elementary after implementing a similar program in California. She said after the PTA introduced it, all the schools in the San Francisco bay area wrap their schools during the DARE and Drug Free week.

"It shows the kids the community is behind them, that there's not a lot of 'bad' out there," she said.

Wiprud organized several other activities for that school this week, including a poster contest, crazy hat day (today) and recess games with volunteers from the U.S.S. Florida.

North Kitsap Drug Free Awareness Week started Saturday and runs through May 2 with various in-school activities including school assemblies, classroom lessons, take-home flyers, drama productions, D.A.R.E, MADD red ribbon distribution and family activities.

Check your local school for specific activities. Here are some of community events taking place:

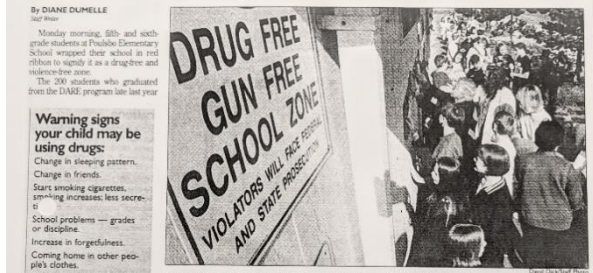
●Wednesday, April 29: Drug free t-shirt day; North Kitsap pride academic awards 7 p.m.

●Friday, May 1: Pledge Day.

●Saturday, May 2: NK Violence Intervention and Prevention Program at Central Market.

TTuesday, May 5: Wellness fun run by bus; turn around is at North Kitsap High School. 1.5 mile run is at 4:30 p.m. and the three mile run is at 5 p.m.

●Lynn Drake, DUI Task Force Coordinator for Kitsap County will speak to parents and students about the dangers of teenage drinking and driving by providing a hands-on demonstration showing the effects of drinking2-9 p.m., May 21 at Kingston Junior High. The event is open to the public. Information 297-3140.



David Dickstall Photo

Poulsbo Elementary School students decorated the school with a six-inch-thick red ribbon. It only took less than the time expect the surround the entire school with the drug free symbol.

Warning signs your child may be using drugs:

Change in sleeping pattern.

Change in friends.

Start smoking cigarettes, smoking increases; less secreti

School problems — grades or discipline.

Increase in forgetfulness.

Coming home in other people's clothes.

Increase in defiance of house or family rules.

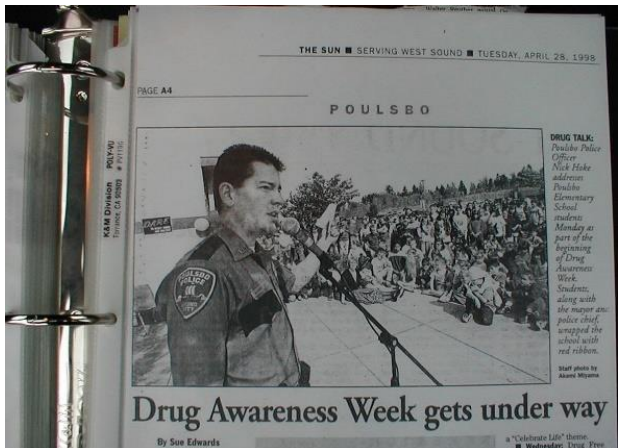
Possession of paraphernalia. Items missing from the home or child selling possessions. Child admits it.

If any one or two of the above is happening, it could be for other reasons, but still check it out, said Larry Layton, a chemical abuse specialist at Kitsap Mental Heath Services.

Saturday, April 26, 1997 ● North Kitsap Herald



Nick Hoke, Poulsbo Police Officer for the DARE Program in North Kitsap, expressed thankful recognition Wednesday evening, April 9, to Poulsbo Chapter No. 235, Order of the Eastern Star for their support of the DARE program in 1996. Pictured above from left to right are Worthy Matron, Mary Whittaker, Past Matron (1996) Iona Lund, Officer Hoke, Mrs. Hoke, and Worthy Patron Harold Richardson.



Drug Awareness Week gets under way

By Sue Edwards
For The Sun

Poulsbo Mayor Richard "Mitch" Mitchuson and Police Chief Jeff Doran kicked off North Kitsap School District's

Anti-drug activities are scheduled this week at all North Kitsap Schools and at several businesses.

a "Celebrate Life" theme.

■ **Wednesday:** Drug Free shirt all day at Central Market "DARE" or "FACE IT-Drug Free Communities Are up to You" shirts; Kingston. TheWay h. been distributing grocery ba. all week with drug free theme



Jim Bryant/Staff Photo

Poulsbo DARE officer Nick Hoke, Bainbridge Island DARE officer Phil Hawkins, and Bremerton DARE officer Crystal Grey believe the program plays a vital role in drug prevention efforts in their communities. At the county level, the DARE program was killed two years ago.

City cops say DARE or be square

▼ Officers swear by the anti-drug effort that Kitsap County dropped.

By DENNIS WILKEN
Staff Writer

Two years after the positions were eliminated in the Kitsap County Sheriff Department, the Poulsbo, Bainbridge Island and Bremerton police departments still have DARE officers.

DARE (Drug Abuse Resistance and Education) is an early intervention program which has given Washington

And Kitsap County Sheriff Pat Jones abolished the county's DARE program in August of 1995.

At the time, Jones said DARE was an effective and that the county couldn't afford it. The county had three DARE officers and a $68,000 annual budget.

In an interview last December, when asked what accomplishments he was proudest of, Jones mentioned the abolition of DARE.

That's not a position Phil Hawkins understands. He's been the Bainbridge Island Police Department's DARE officer for the past six years.

"I'm not in a position to

intervention program]," Hawkins added.

Crystal Gray has been a police officer for nine years. Four weeks ago, she became the city of Bremerton's DARE (and community services) officer. She's already noticed the difference in her relationships with kids.



PAT JONES.
Sheriff killed county DARE program in August 1995.

"The difference is the kids just love you. Even kids who don't like police can't wait for you to come to their schools," Gray said.

"A lot of patrol officers think DARE is too touchy-feely. But that's a misconception," said Nick Hoke, the Poulsbo Police DARE and crime prevention officer for

grade level, and also to teach one class at the middle school. I'm in the classroom speaking to 30 to 115 kids," Hawkins said.

Hoke said the educational process goes both ways.

"A lot of people think these kids are real savvy, because of television and movies, but a lot of them have no idea...some don't even know cigarettes are addicting or that nicotine is a drug," he said.

"Teaching kids at the elementary level is so fun, and there's so much more reward than in any other kind of police work," said Hawkins, who has been a policeman for 20 years and a DARE officer for the last seven.

Sixteen 50-minute classes are taught by all D.A.R.E. officers. The

Five ballot measures set to be decided on Nov. 4

By DENNIS WILKEN
Staff Writer

When statewide initiatives pass at the polls, they become state law exactly the way they are written.

They cannot be revisited or remodel by the Legislature for a specified number of years, usually three to five.

"Such legislative inflexibility adds a certain importance to Nov. 4's vote.

The five initiatives confronting the voters cover an interesting range of issues, from the specialized findspersfirst dental hygienist to the nearly universal "handgun safety licenses for all gun owners".

All of the official ballot statements and following summaries in this article were written through the state attorney general's office, as required by law.

INITIATIVE 673

Official ballot title: "Shall health insurance plans be regulated as to provision of services by designated health care providers, managed care provisions, and disclosure of certain plan information?"

"If approved into law, this measure would establish additional requirements for health plans, effective July 1998. Each plan would be required to ensure that people changing health plans or changing employment would not be required to change their doctor or nurse practitioner. Health carriers would be required to disclose certain additional information about their health plans, including percentage of premium and investment income attributable to salaries and administration."

Proponents of I-673 say the plan requires health insurance companies to disclose any restrictions on your health plan and gives you the ability to keep your own doctor if you change jobs or health plans.

The president of the Washington State Council for Senior Citizens, Lars

SCENE&HEARD

Saturday, July 19, 1997 ● North Kitsap Herald



Nick Hoke (left), Poulsbo crime prevention officer, uses displays donated by Brett Hunt, owner of Fantasy Realm, as part of a D.A.R.E anti-smoking campaign. Listening to Hoke's presentation are



Poulsbo Police Officer Nick Hoke patrols downtown Poulsbo on foot on Sunday. A new study will look at a range of options for the police department, including contracting out the service.

Poulsbo Police Officers a Thing of the Past?

Amid increased service call numbers and a quickly expanding city, Poulsbo Mayor Kathryn Quade has called for an inquiry to determine the future of the local police department.

By JOSH FARLEY
AND DEREK SHEPPARD
Kitsap Sun

POULSBO POLICE ACTIVITY

Police 911 calls for service:

2005	11,219
2006	13,374

Number of cases handled:

2005	1,086
2006	1,098

Number of fatal arrests:

2005	539
2006	831

Source: Poulsbo Police Department

Poulsbo — As analysis of the Poulsbo Police Department commissioned by Mayor Kathryn Quade beginning this week will look at a range of options, including contracting the service out to the local Sheriff's Office.

Quade said the study, which consulting firm Miller and Miller will begin Tuesday, is meant to be a holistic look at the needs of the growing small city's police force in a "concrete, analytical, unemotional fashion."

In 2004, all of the city's departments were under the microscope, resulting in consolidation and reorganization of several departments — but the police were never fully studied, she said.

Poulsbo Chief Jeff Doran, who will retire at the end of March, said the study's recommendations will likely look at two "extremes" — keeping the department at its current level of staffing or undergoing the consolidation. He said he expects the actual outcome will be "something in the middle" of those options.

One thing's certain. With various annexations including the Olhava development, which includes retailers Wal-Mart and The Home Depot and several smaller businesses, police work in Poulsbo has picked up considerably. Calls to 911 are up 18 percent in the past year, Doran said, and the department handled about 400 more cases in 2006 than in 2005.

The chief has requested a new sergeant and one new officer in his proposed budget, due to the increase in numbers.

Shawn Ziemann, president of the Poulsbo Police Officer's association, said a process study "can be a good thing" for the city — but the idea of consolidation into the Sheriff's Office isn't.

"I would really hope that wouldn't be the case," he said. "Poulsbo residents are just not going to get the same response out of the Sheriff's Office that you would from your local police department."

"It's not my intent to contract out," Quade said, adding that it would be prudent to consider all options. The consultants will analyze whether the department should consolidate with the Kitsap County Sheriff's Office, decrease or reallocate personnel, or keep the status quo. It will also look at ways to make the department more efficient, such as faster ways to write police reports and how the chain of command operates, Quade said.

She said during Wednesday's City Council meeting that consolidating would be her "least favorite" option.

Kitsap County Sheriff Steve Boyer said it is Quade's and the city's call as to what works best for them.

"Our elected leaders would be remiss if they did not explore all reasonable options," Boyer said. "Contracting for police services is used around the nation successfully. At the same time, I recognize the importance of maintaining

SEE POLICE | A6

Wednesday, December 17, 1997 ● North Kitsap Herald

Crushing evidence for bike helmets

By MIKE HALLIDAY
Staff Writer

POULSBO — When Cheryl Higgenbotham felt her bikini was not over something round, she assumed it was a basketball a fit-fellow-sorority.

Higgenbotham lived on a street-ramp with children, and it wasn't uncommon for them to leave toys on the road.

But when she got out of the car and rolled over the object, Higgenbotham discovered it was her husband's bicycle helmet crushed into pieces and one of his shoes nearby.

Jerod Baldwin, her son, had been wearing his helmet when he went for the bicycle ride. Higgenbotham couldn't see him, and since he was inside the car.

"It looked like a pile of leaves," Higgenbotham said of what was once Jerod's helmet.

"I remember seeing boxes and thought, 'Jerod said. His mother frowned but she might have blacked out during the accident.

Afraid to look under her car, Higgenbotham cried for her father to help her. Jerod's grandfather came to see Jerod and himself out from underneath the car. His mother and grandfather rushed him to a clinic. Jerod there Jerod was taken by ambulance to Harrison Hospital where doctors were stunned.

For a little boy who had his head run over by the tire of a van weighing thousands of pounds, Jerod walked away with some bruises and scrapes and some bruised muscles.

Higgenbotham credits the bike helmet for saving her son's life. When she ran over Jerod's head, the force ripped him out of the helmet.

Jerod explained after the accident to the chief of the bicycle patrol that in the back of the car to go with his mother. Mom Higgenbotham stepped the car. Jerod fell off and it the helmet was.

It was an unusual circumstance, to be sure.

Bike helmets are meant to protect riders from injuries they get while on their bikes. Neil Higgenbotham said Jerod probably would have been wearing the helmet had it not been for a little safety clips given by Poulsbo Police Officer Nick Hoke.

Hoke, and the Isle of Poulsbo, are part of a countywide program called WHEELS (Wearing Helmets Equals Extra Likes) that promotes and educates children about the benefits of wearing a helmet.

After meeting Hoke's class, Jerod was wearing his helmet everywhere, even in the house.

The program started in 1992 in partnership with the Harborview Injury Prevention Project.



Jerod Baldwin shows what's left of his old bicycle helmet after it was run over by a car. The smashed helmet probably saved Jerod's life, officer Nick Hoke says. Hoke now gives out helmets as part of a countywide program called WHEELS (Wearing Helmets Equals Extra Likes) that promotes and educates children about the benefits of wearing a helmet.

The Kitsap Sun Photo

So goal was to get children to wear bike helmets, and base the number of helmets to prevent such injury, said Meg Higgenbotham, program manager for community health education at the Kitsap County Health Department.

According to the national department of transportation, 600 children under the nationwide account for more than one-third of the fatal bicycle accidents in 1994, and most fatal bicycle injuries are from head injuries.

It's also expensive for taxpayers to take care of brain injured victims of bicycle accidents, Higgenbotham said.

Five years later the local program has made some progress, based on school district boundaries, focusing on one school bicycle rodeo. There are bicycle rodeos when children can have their bikes safety checked, have the rules of the road, and get fitted for helmets.

It's for babies that WHEELS refers to impart on the younger children, said Dr. Barney Stoddard, a local pediatrician. Being aware of what's around them, riding correctly and knowing what they should and shouldn't do.

Before the program started in 1992 a countywide head count of how many children were helmets was conducted. It revealed that 20 percent, or 67 children, were wearing their helmets. A year later 30 percent were wearing their helmets. In the school district counted in 1995, 10 — or 60 percent — were wearing their helmets.

The next year of the 17 children counted five — 30 percent — were wearing their helmets.

According to the county health district, North Kitsap was surveyed by 20 percent.

Those who don't wear a helmet usually aren't angry at the law or can't afford one, Officer Nick Hoke said.

"I think we're very within three children," Hoke said.

Depending on styles and brand names helmets can cost up to $100.

When the helmet are was brought the city council didn't extend it, mainly because councilmembers worried low-income families wouldn't be able to afford helmets.

It passed when local businesses and businesses worked together to give helmets to disadvantaged youth.

Hoke said the police and fire departments have given out about 200 helmets since the law was enacted.

While young children have caught onto the program, Stoddard and other team members are trying to find a way to interest older children.

"It (the crushed helmet) looked like a pile of leaves."
— Cheryl Higgenbotham

Public service announcements have been tried, but not with much success, he said.

Stoddard, Hagerman and injury prevention specialist Kim Dahl said they believed one method may be to have their role models who were helmets.

As Stoddard put it, "to show them it's cool."

Hagerman said until adults start choosing helmets and the bicycle rodeo is good for everyone, the job is making older children to strap on a bike helmet will be a long process.

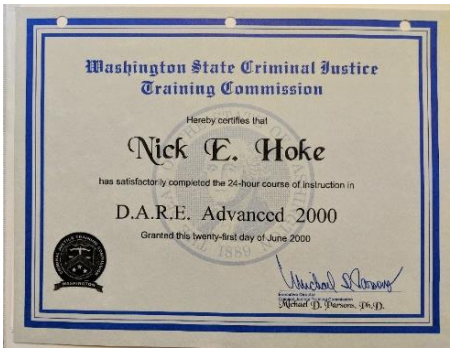
Which leads to another goal of getting the rest of the county to approve helmet laws.

That goes into the political arena, and in Essex for bike safety program hasn't been too successful. The only helmet law is in Poulsbo. Recently the North Kitsap School District narrowly failed to vote on a helmet law.

Stoddard said there were concerns about how the school district would enforce the rule, and how it could be enforced in the county where there's no law.

"You have to walk before you can run," Stoddard said of the geographical importance.

But Hagerman is confident change will happen. The WHEELS team in Bremerton has recently decided to start gathering information for eventually making a push to that city-municipal or a helmet law.


Washington State Criminal Justice Training Commission

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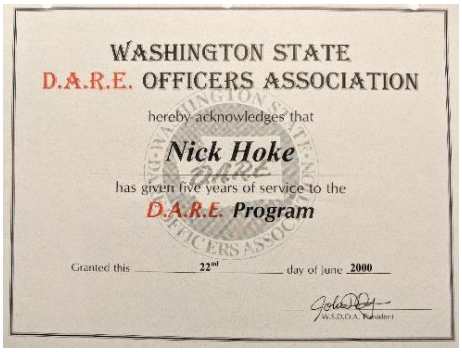
Nick E. Hoke

has satisfactorily completed the 24-hour course of instruction in

D.A.R.E. Advanced 2000

Granted this twenty-first day of June 2000

Richard D. Parsons, Ph.D.


WASHINGTON STATE
D.A.R.E. OFFICERS ASSOCIATION

hereby acknowledges that

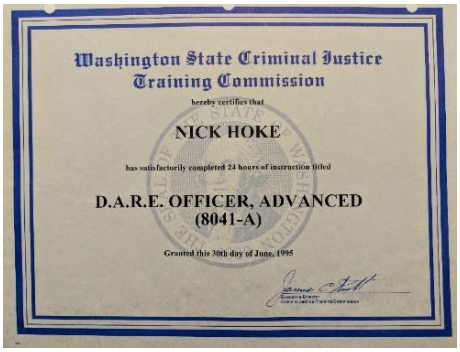
Nick Hoke

has given five years of service to the

D.A.R.E. Program

Granted this 22nd day of June 2000

W.S.D.O.A. President


Washington State Criminal Justice Training Commission

hereby certifies that

NICK HOKE

has satisfactorily completed 24 hours of instruction titled

D.A.R.E. OFFICER, ADVANCED
(8041-A)

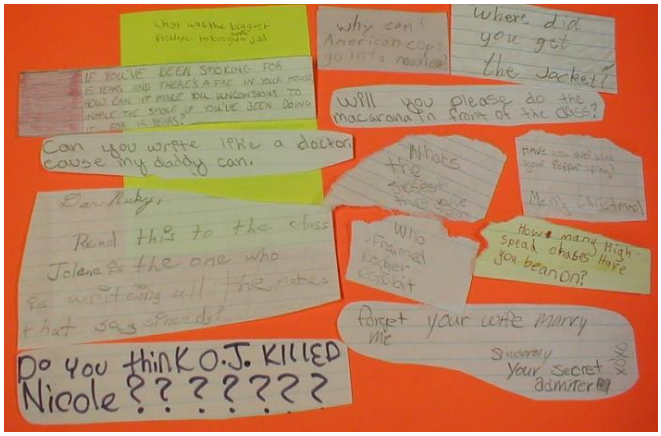
Granted this 30th day of June, 1995

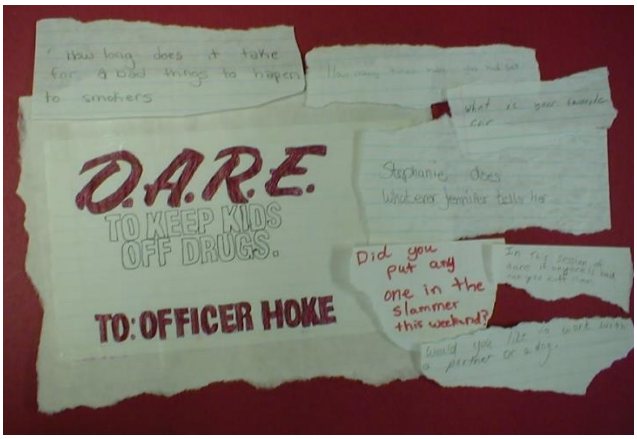
One of the highlights of the DARE classes I taught was that each class got a special question box where the kids could submit anonymous handwritten notes for me to read. I'd start each class out with the notes, reading them quietly to myself first before choosing which ones to address out loud. Most were typical elementary school questions like "what do drugs taste like?" and "will my uncle die from smoking?" and "do you like our teacher, I mean really LIKE her?" And there were a lot of ones that were just statements, such as "my older sister got drunk last weekend", "my friend smoked pot" and "I like corn."

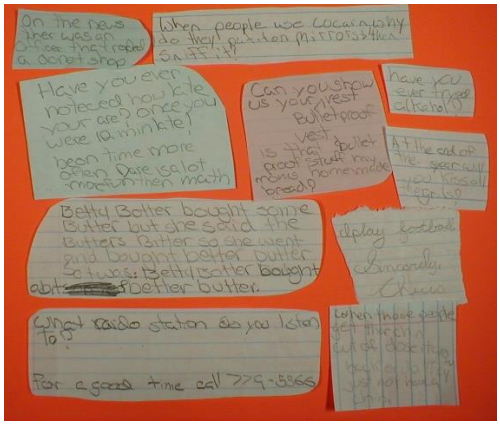
Over the years there were of course hundreds and hundreds of questions submitted on scraps of paper. I saved most of them and photographed them years later; the original scraps are all long gone now. I'd like to add some photos of me in the classrooms with the kids, but no pictures like that were ever taken. Ok here are some of the notes I got, with original misspellings included:

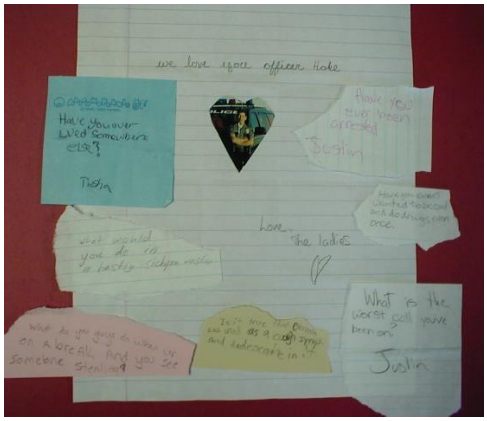
How many girls Have you arrested?
Do you like driving in fast pursuits?
Did you have to work on Christmas?
What do drugs contain that is so addictive?
The Aliens are coming.
It really eased the fright of next year.
Can you be a arcualagist if you take drugs.
Do you like Mrs. Sherman and mean like like.
Could you get cancer from second hang smoke.
How did cigarettes even get started who thought of making sticks that you put in your mouth and smoke comes out of the end who thought of putting all those poisons in cigarettes.
If you borrow the car from your parents and there is alcohol in the trunk but you don't know its in there and you're under 18 what will happen? What should you do when you know someone that dose a drug but you don't want to tell on them. Have you ever got bloody from the victim? If you get a new liver transplant couldn't you get a disease from somebody elses blood being in your body?
Do you like Danny?
Are you gay? How old are you? What did you look like when you were 12?
Have you even get hurt doing your job?
My dad smokes, how can he stop?
I need to talk to you about what my dad did in private.
How long have you loved your wife? I like baseball.
How many women are on the police force?
Do you have any pets?
Do you like football? Did you get a haircut?
How many guns do you have?
Do you play football?
Do you like kids?
What is the meaning of life?
Thank you for having those high schoolers come in.
Have you read Harry Potter books?
Will you bring in a police dog?
Do you drink beer after work?
Amy loves you!
Will a bullet go through your badge?
Have you arrested someone for murder?
Mr Hoke I have a friend who goes behind a school and smokes everyday! What should I do?

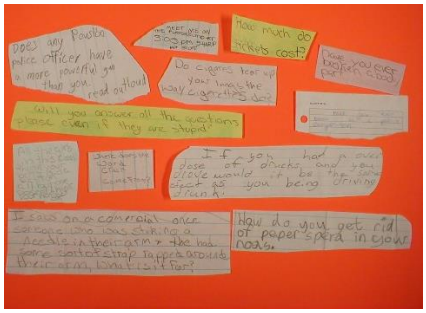
Have you had to arrest someone for blowing up a billeding?
How many people did you arrest on new years?
Someone I know that is older than 30 smokes how do I get her to stop
What would you do if your dad went to jail
Is it true that doctors say it is ok to have couple beers a week when your pregnant
Did you have to go to college to get your job
When you were a kid did you ever get in trouble?
Can we pass around the gun please
My dog has big toenails
Is you bage real gold or is it plastic or metal
Have you ever been offered drugs
The recess aids are screwed
Thank you for doing DARE
Do you like nachos?
How many axidents have you been to?
How many prisoners are in the jail?
Who did you vote for in the presidential election?
What was your first automobile?
I have hair in my pits
Did somebody ask you take drugs ever what did you say?
Do you know how much cocaine costs?
I was reading in a book about cirrhosis what is it?
Do you wear boxers?
Officer Hoke I think your very cute to bad your married.
Has anyone ever told you that you look like Matthew Broderick?











Like I said, I had to read the notes first to myself before reading them out loud to the classes.

SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICER

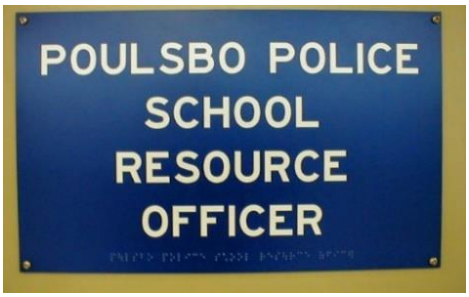
After five years of D.A.R.E. anti-drug presentations I then transitioned to a full-time School Resource Officer, a special police assignment that was becoming more popular and mainstream across the country, mostly because there had been a dramatic rise in the number and severity of school shootings and massacres by deranged students. There was not enough funding for both a DARE Officer and an SRO, and the school district wanted an SRO more than a DARE Office, and I was the best choice to fill that new position.

Eventually most of the state's DARE officers (maybe a couple hundred of us) became SRO's because we were the kind of officers who liked working with students already and the DARE programs were being slowly phased out.



But before that, it was still a kind of unusual thing to see police officers in schools. When I first started spending time at the high school and junior high it caused quite a stir amongst the students but as the years went on they got so accustomed to me that most of them wouldn't even blink if they came around the corner in the main hallway and just about literally ran into me. Which was very different from when I had been a student in that high same school 15 years earlier; I had only seen one officer at the school one time for a career day presentation; if a police officer had been seen just hanging out in the main officer or hallway or classroom it would have been a really, really big deal. Times change.

It takes a special kind of officer to volunteer work in the schools with students. Most police officers could not and would not work in the schools for a number of reasons, the main one was because they all thought it was beneath them and none of it was "real" (traditional) police work. It was also difficult to adjust to dealing with teenagers and pre-teens, many of whom could be quite obnoxious. There was also friction between the school principals and the officers in terms what kind of discipline should be administered to the kids; invariably most officers preferred more punishment and the principals were usually more lenient.



And just like being a DARE Officer, most of my coworkers considered my assignment out of patrol as being less than impressive. As usual, I didn't care what they thought. Eventually, they all came around and more or less accepted the whole idea, mostly because the SRO was the one who took all the reports at the schools about the kids fighting or drinking or doing drugs or harassing each other – all crimes, yes, but not as exciting as doing road work patrol. The chief had pondered letting me work in a more casual uniform, like a polo shirt style, with less gunbelt tools, but I didn't like that idea, mostly because a lot of the kids were bigger than me and I liked the official and maybe imposing look of carrying all the police gear I could.

I enjoyed working in the schools. The duty was relatively easy and it kept me on a day shift instead of a night shift which is what I would have been stuck with since I was still a rookie officer with low seniority. And my days off were (of course) weekends, which was really great. But during the summer school breaks I'd fill in for the patrol officers on night shift, and I continued to do regular police patrol work on days when there was no school. So although I was a school cop, I did work patrol as often as I could to keep my skills sharp. And if there were any car collisions involving local teenagers I'd handle those, since I naturally became kind of protective about all the kids.

All of the kids who had been in the school district through elementary school and middle school of course already knew me, and it was not uncommon to see my former DARE grads proudly wearing their black, red, or white DARE t-shirts to school.

I was assigned to the two elementary schools, one middle school, and one high school. I decided to set up shop in the high school; because those high school kids needed the most attention. I was originally put in with the school's security staff (three of them) in a back room but I managed to convince the principal to move me to a more visible location. I found a small supply closet in the cafeteria that was used to access electrical circuit breakers. The loud humming coming from the metal boxes didn't bother me; I had the old boxes and chairs In there moved out and I had a desk brought in. I got the door cut in half so I could open the top half and be approachable for the kids. I brought in an old giant red and blue police car lightbar and set it up on a shelf in the back. It didn't work but it did add to the ambience in there nicely.

Here's a photo before the door got cut in half:



The supply was located right next to the attendance office (also facing the lunchroom) so within about 2 days every kid in school knew where my office was. A sign outside was added to make it official. Then I talked the wood shop kids into making a large display case made for me, and the principal let me put it up on a wall in the which I put on the other side of the attendance office. I stuffed it full of random things; photos and cautionary tales of local car crashes; stats about drugs and drug abuse, and a lot of educational photos.





I added a large mirror in there, knowing teens needed to preen themselves regularly and I wanted to attract them to the board.





I was a full-time School Resource Officer for five years. During that time I saw a lot of kids come and go and I was able to make some positive changes in some of their lives.

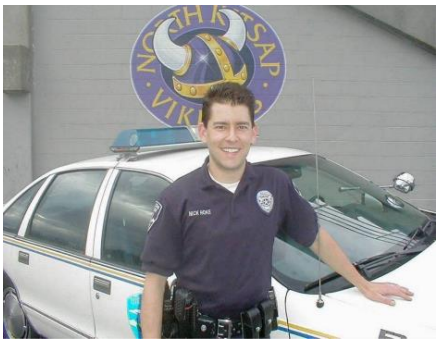
Quite a few of the kids needed protecting from themselves. I took a dim view of teenagers smoking cigarettes in the woods and neighborhoods surround the high school. Back then, an astonishing 30% of teenagers were regular smokers. Can you imagine? Out of 100 kids, 30 of them were smokers!

In the mid 90's the state lawmakers finally got around to actually make it a crime for kids under 18 to smoke. It had been illegal for years but there were no procedures to enforce it. When it became a class III civil infraction for minors to be in possession of tobacco, I started issuing a lot of tickets to the kids I caught smoking. I spent a lot of time walking trails through the woods around the school, stalking groups of kids and catching them with cigarettes in hand. One time I caught a group of about 20 kids all hiding and smoking; before I could react one of them bolted off into down a trail. Instant conundrum: Do I stay with the 19, or go after the one running, who must certainly have drugs in his pockets? I went after the one running. Of course the other 19 immediately scattered the second I turned away from them. By the time I caught the one kid, he had thrown his stash. Or he was the designated decoy. It was an instant no-win situation for me. Oh look I made the front page of the local paper for my efforts:

After several years I tapered off the tickets and settled for just threatening the kids with tickets, but I always made them destroy their cigarettes and lighters and sometimes I'd make them call their parents (when cell phones started becoming the thing) and explain why they were going to be late for their next class. I know there were a lot of students who hated me for it but for years afterward I'd have an occasional former student approach me and admit that getting busted and issued a $105 dollar ticket was the final incentive they needed to quit smoking. I have no idea how many kids quit smoking because of me but considering I caught literally hundreds over the years, I think it would be safe to say I saved at least a couple dozen. I never felt bad at all about my methods, even though a lot of fellow officers thought it was a silly thing to focus on at that time. I still don't regret yelling at and chasing kids and destroying their cigarettes. I took very few photos back then, the best I can do for this page is me and a random stray dog I picked up on campus:

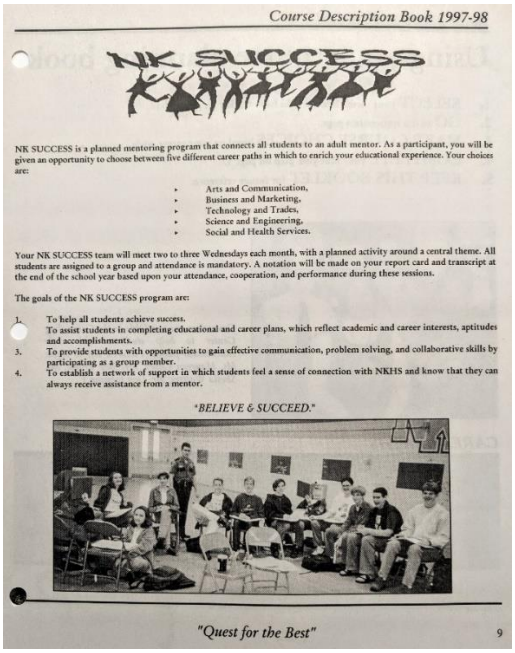






I can also claim direct responsibility for convincing a few land owners to trim trees and bushes where the kids would hang out near the school; a lot of hiding spaces were opened up on city parkland, nearby apartment complexes, churches, and on the back of school properties. That actually curtailed quite a bit of the hiding-in-the-woods-smoking activity, and to this day the cleared areas are still clear and visible.

For several years I also participated in a special mentor program to groups of high school kids; one of my groups had the high school principal's teenage son. Leftover from my DARE classes I had some "drunk goggles" that when worn, seriously impaired one's vision and balance:



Course Description Book 1997-98

NK SUCCESS

NK SUCCESS is a planned mentoring program that connects all students to an adult mentor. As a participant, you will be given an opportunity to choose between five different career paths in which to enrich your educational experience. Your choices are:

- Arts and Communication,
- Business and Marketing,
- Technology and Trades,
- Science and Engineering,
- Social and Health Services.

Your NK SUCCESS team will meet two to three Wednesdays each month, with a planned activity around a central theme. All students are assigned to a group and attendance is mandatory. A notation will be made on your report card and transcript at the end of the school year based upon your attendance, cooperation, and performance during these sessions.

The goals of the NK SUCCESS program are:

1. To help all students achieve success.
2. To assist students in completing educational and career plans, which reflect academic and career interests, aptitudes and accomplishments.
3. To provide students with opportunities to gain effective communication, problem solving, and collaborative skills by participating as a group member.
4. To establish a network of support in which students feel a sense of connection with NKHS and know that they can always receive assistance from a mentor.

"BELIEVE & SUCCEED."

"Quest for the Best" 9



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WEST SOUND

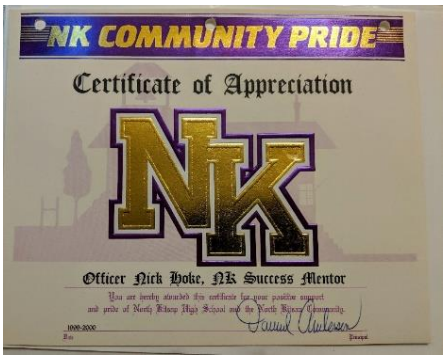
NEWS ABOUT KITSAP, JEFFERSON AND MASON COUNTIES

NORTH KITSAP HIGH SCHOOL

Zach Cundiff, 16, tries out the goggles that police officer Nick Hoke brought to North Kitsap High School to let teens experience the DUI test with the impaired vision of a person under the influence of alcohol. Professionals in the Poulsbo community come to school to mentor students as part of the North Kitsap Success program. Another part of the program involves senior-class students who offer advice and support to sophomores.

Mentors make a difference

More proof that I was there, and did that. OR, proof I'm a pretty good document forger:







I also started a unique "proud to be drug free" club in an effort to promote the coolness of being, well, drug free, with a minor amount of success. The kids who signed up had to sign and pledge and they got a real nice certificate and a tiny little silver police badge.

I spent most of my time at the high school and the rest of the time at the middle school. I'd also visit the elementary schools and work a lot of traffic patrol around the schools. When there were car accidents near the schools that involved teens I'd take care of those scenes, since I had developed a kind of ownership for the kids and the area around the schools.





At that time the Poulsbo high school had a special classroom out in a portable building for juvenile delinquents. It was a class filled with the worst of the worst; their behavioral problems had got them kicked out of regular classrooms and they were all just one step away from being expelled. A few had even been expelled from other school districts and they only reason why NKHS wanted them was because for every extra body the district had enrolled they qualified for a bit more federal funding. All of those kids had extensive prior arrest and conviction records and a good majority of left school and eventually earned their way into different prisons. I got called to that portable a lot for fights and drugs, or for picking kids up on warrants or new criminal charges when they committed offenses out in the community.

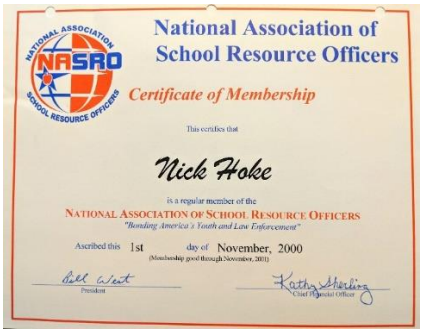
I got into a few fights with unruly teens as an SRO. One kid had gotten called to the main office because he was too jumpy and acting like he had ants in his pants. Turned out he had taken too many prescription pills he took from another student. The kid was really amped up and ignored my requests and then demands to just sit still and stop blathering so much. When he started to get really defiant I decided to handcuff him but he broke free from me before I could get the first cuff on and I wound up on top of him on the floor as he flailed and wailed. The principal helped hold down his legs and I got the cuffs on but then realized that when I first picked him up and spun him around I twisted my ankle badly. It later swelled up considerably and although I should have taken at least several days off from work I limped in to school the next day because I was worried some random kid might try to spread a rumor that I got my ass kicked in the main office and that's why I wasn't in school any more. So for the next couple days I limped into the cafeteria before lunch and propped myself up against a wall (and didn't move at all!) so everybody could see I was still around and I was able to thwart any potential crazy rumors.

Another time I had to drag a 17 year old kid with a long criminal record out of a classroom after he started arguing with the teacher and refused to leave and stop disrupting the class. I was able to sneak in to the classroom and rush up to him before he saw me but at that last second he was able to escape my grasp and the fight was on. After about the third desk and chair got knocked over the teacher had the whole class run out and left us alone. The fight lasted a long minute and eventually I was able to get the cuffs on him without getting injured. On the way down the hall towards the exit door he wanted to start fighting again which gave me a good reason to slam him up against a wall of lockers which made a really extremely satisfying loud crashing

sound. When I got him out to the parking lot another officer had responded to help me and he opened the back door to his patrol car. The kid was continuing to swear and struggle against my grip. "Stuff him in here!" my partner directed. "I don't think we should put him in the back of the car," I suggested. I explained the kid looked like he was going to go crazy in the car was soon as we let go of him. I wasn't persuasive enough and the other officer scoffed and put the punk into the back of the car. As soon as the back door closed on him the kid reared back with his head and then flung his head forward towards the partition barrier between the front and back seat. "Oh shit!" said the other officer as we both saw and heard the huge whump sound as the kids' forehead smashed into the Plexiglas. The officer opened his door and pulled the kid out right as the blood started to pour out of his split-open forehead. We called for an aid car and had the kid strapped down and taken away. We later looked in the back of the car and could not find a single drop of blood; my partner had moved so fast to open the door and yank the kid out he didn't have to clean up any blood in his car.

One of the challenges working in the schools was that my clients were the same problem children day after day, week after week. Now, working patrol on the streets we'd have some frequent flier customers but never like working in the schools. At any one given time I'd have a list of about a dozen punk loser trouble making students who were causing 90% of the problems like fights, thefts, threats, etc. It took a lot of discipline to tolerate some of those teens. Seeing the same kids day after day skipping classes to go smoke in the woods, never bringing homework home, getting into fights all the time was very frustrating. Most of them were classified as having learning disabilities so they were a protected species and by law were limited to the number and duration of suspensions. And invariably, their loser parents tried to protect them and made excuses for them and got mad when I caught them doing things they shouldn't have been doing.

Looking back, comparing the high school to what it was like in the 1980's, to the '90's and beyond, I can say that I was unfortunately the SRO during the meanest, worst years. I mean the school was still a very nice place, and the overall demographics and funding and community involvement was terrific and compared to other schools like in inner-city places like Pittsburgh or Washington DC or Baltimore or 500 other cities, NKSH was still very safe. But for a few years, I was there when there were too many bad kids doing too many bad things and I had to get physical with too many of them and haul them away. I'm pretty confident with my assessment because I attended that high school as a student in the mid-80's, and my boys attended to that school much later, and I no time was as worse as when I was the chief enforcer there. So yeah, I can say that I did my time in the trenches.


National Association of School Resource Officers

Certificate of Membership

This certifies that

Nick Hoke

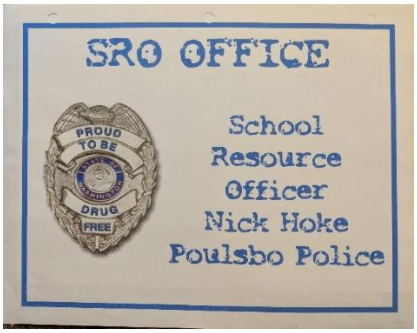
is a regular member of the

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICERS

"Bonding America's Youth and Law Enforcement"

Ascribed this 1st day of November, 2000

(Membership good through November, 2001)




WASHINGTON STATE

Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction

Criminal Justice Training Commission

hereby certifies

Nick E. Hoke

has completed the 40-hour Law Enforcement School Officer Training conducted in Adna, Washington, August 21-25, 2000

Dr. Terry Bergeson
State Superintendent of Public Instruction

Michael D. Parsons, Ph.D., Executive Director
Criminal Justice Training Commission

There was one program where they put all the "bad" kids in a portable building. Kids who had been expelled from other high schools. Because school districts get federal money for each student enrolled, somebody figured out that it would be worth it to bring in about a dozen of those bad kids. They were, literally, the worst of the worst. Every single one had a long arrest record, and almost every single one got eventually arrested (by me) again. And again. Eventually most of them got expelled (again) and eventually the school district gave up on that whole program. Fortunately, I have never seen anything like it again since then in a public school. It was definitely a different time back then and just that one portable of bad apples made my job considerably more difficult.

I remember going into the classroom once for an out-of-control student that the teachers and aides couldn't handle. I walked in and saw the following: One kid sitting at his desk with a stack of hot-rod car magazines in front of him. Another kid carving more initials in his desktop. Five kid staring at a movie playing on the TV: "The Hunt for Red October". I remember this well

Two trends came into fashion back in those days; popular with the teen boys. The first one was the wearing of saggy pants. Originally a "gangsta" look it was appropriated by white suburban boys and eventually even Justin Beiber, although by the time he came on the scene that style was on its way out.



SCHOOLS

COMING UP

Wednesday, Jan. 10 will be a half-day for all schools in the North Kitsap School District. It is an instructional improvement day.

Saturday, January 6, 2001 • North Kitsap Herald

Resource officer starts drug-free program

NKHS students rewarded for staying off drugs.

By TREVOR PYLE
Staff Writer

POULSBO — As North Kitsap High School's Student Resource Officer (SRO), Nick Hoke knows that drug, alcohol, and tobacco use are a part of school — every school. To help deal with the problem, Hoke has started a program to help students stay drug-free.

"I think one of the big problems isn't that kids are doing drugs," Hoke said, "but that other kids are condoning it. That drives me crazy."

So Hoke began NKCOPS this year. NKCOPS stands for North Kitsap Coalition of Proud Students, and the program already boasts almost 90 members in its first year of existence.

In it, each student signs an application that includes his or her signature, plus the signatures of six other people.

The application swears that the student is drug-free, and they will remain so. The first line reads, "From this day forward, I, ____, vow to keep my body and mind drug free."

Below are the signatures.

Students, Hoke said, cannot join on their word alone. They must gather other signatures of those who can vouch for the students' seriousness about staying drug-free. The signatures include another NKCOPS member, a parent, an adult, a teacher, and two friends.

"That way, there's quite a bit of accountability," Hoke said.

He tried to make the club both strict in its demands that students remain free of drugs, alcohol, and tobacco, but also not a burden on students' time, Hoke said.

"There are lot of kids who qualify, but don't sign up," Hoke said. "They won't sign up because it's a club, or they won't sign up because it's associated with the police, or they won't sign up because they say they're too busy. I tell them, hey, we don't have any meetings, we don't have anything for you to do but stay drug-free. It's real easy."

One student, senior Elizabeth Lee, joined after she heard about the program through LINK (Leaders in North Kitsap).

"I thought, 'That sounds interesting. It sounds like a good idea,'" Lee said.

Lee said, "It lets people see kids aren't ashamed to be drug-free. A lot of my friends are drug-free anyway, so we're all excited to find a way to take a stand."

Examples of that stand hang outside Hoke's office in the high school's cafeteria, where more than 80 pictures hang from a display case. The pictures are of NKCOPS members. Every time a student joins, Hoke takes their picture.

That's not all. Each student is also presented with a certificate (signed by the school board superintendent and law enforcement personnel) and a small pin shaped like a badge.

Hoke also hands out prizes to NKCOPS, rewarding them for staying drug-free. But he knows the program's growth won't be fueled by him but by students.

"The kids can sell the program better than I can," Hoke said.

That doesn't stop him from setting goals. Hoke would like to more than double NKCOPS membership this year, to 200.

That's about 15 percent of the school, Hoke figures — a pretty good number.

More than kids who are already drug-free, Hoke would like to get more kids who once used drugs and alcohol but have now turned away from it.

"I just want to develop a better attitude in school, where kids develop a zero-tolerance attitude (towards drugs and alcohol)," Hoke said.

He added: "That's not easy — in North Kitsap, or any other school."

Trevor Pyle/ Staff Photo

Poulsbo Police's Nick Hoke has started NKCOPS, a program designed to help kids stay drug-free. The photos of drug-free kids are displayed proudly in the school.



New program fines underage students $95 for smoking anytime, anywhere

Staff photos by Larry Steagall

SMOKING TICKET: *A North Kitsap High School student who turned 18 smokes a cigarette off campus Wednesday while an underage smoker, background, gets a ticket for smoking. Below, Poulsbo Police Officer Nick Hoke, left, hands an underage smoker a notice that if he attends a smoking awareness class at the Bremerton-Kitsap County Health District he won't have to pay the $95 ticket given him by fellow Officer Grant Romanic, right.*

Police crack down

By Ray Miller
Sun Staff

To stop the use of pot, crack and meth by schoolchildren in North Kitsap schools, control their use of alcohol and tobacco, says Poulsbo Police Officer Nick Hoke.

Hoke is the department's DARE officer, and he believes so strongly in his approach to controlling hard drug use that he has organized a program with fellow officers and Poulsbo Municipal Judge Jeff Tolman to ticket students for smoking.

The fine is $95, and depends on a state law that makes it illegal for a child to attempt to procure tobacco. Smoking, or the possession of tobacco, is viewed as evidence that the law has been violated.

"We're writing several tickets a week," Hoke said. "A surprising number just pay the fine, and forgo court."

If they do go to court, they likely will be given the option of paying a fine or attending a special anti-smok-

See SMOKING on A7

The other thing that drove adults crazy was that boys were wearing their ball caps crooked. Not backwards, but at like a 45 degree angle. Yes, it looked completely stupid.

Every few years the school would get a new principal. One of them decided the whole ball cap craze was too much for him so he completely banned them from the high school. This was kind of a big deal, because back then at least 2 out of every 3 boys wore ball caps. They all complained, and some vocal parents complained to the principal enough that he had to revise the policy to allow hat wearing outside, because a lot of the kids had to walk to different buildings between classes, or before or after school, and it rained a lot and so the poor little dears needed to keep their heads dry, right? This made enforcing the no-hat rule very difficult for the security staff (all three of them) because no kid left their hat at home; they of course wore them outside and took them off once they got in the hallway. Wait, no, of course they didn't. Because about half the teachers didn't care and even let the kids wear their hats in the classrooms. So between classes, when the hallways were bustling with kids going back and forth, there would be at least a dozen or two out of every hundred with their hats on. It made it difficult for me because I was all about enforcing rules, but it was hard to catch kids when they were down the hall with 63 other kids between us and when they saw me eyeballing them they'd duck into a classroom and be safe. Or even worse, they'd take their hat off before I could confiscate it, and then 10 feet later as they walked around a corner they'd put their hat back on in defiance.

I heard a teacher once complain about the whole hat ban thing. "I used to teach at a school where the principal prohibited gum chewing," he told me. "Guess what happened? Every single kid in the school started chewing gum, all the time. And it was impossible to catch them since they'd just swallow it anytime they got caught." After a few months that principal gave up and decided to just let the kids wear their stupid hats.

I met a lot of school principals over the years. I had always had a lot of respect for their positions but slowly started seeing that just because somebody is a school principal, it doesn't mean they are super smart. In fact, I sadly realized that it was not uncommon to see, uh, pretty stupid folks in administrative positions.

Here's me with the high school security staff, practicing for a high school graduation.





Speaking of kids being little rascals. One time I was working off-duty (but uniformed) security at a high school graduation on the football field one Sunday and there was a minor little incident. There were actually three officers working that event on a bright warm day in June; one officer was walking the parking lots which were packed to overflowing, another officer was in the stands with the thousands of family and spectators, and I stationed myself up in the announcers booth in the stands, which gave me a commanding presence over everything. I parked my DARE van just outside the inner fence on the ball field, on the outside of the running track. I wanted to keep a close eye on it just in case some happy graduating seniors were tempted to mess with it. Everything was going smoothly; the bleachers filled up with several thousand folks, there were hundreds of extra cars parked out on the streets everywhere, and the graduating 12th graders filed out of the gym and lined up on the track to take their places on the football field, which was covered with several hundred chairs arranged around a stage set up in the middle. I didn't think much of the fact that for a brief period of time my line of sight to my police van was obscured by a solid mass of high school seniors in their purple and gold graduating gowns. As the band played and they marched onto the field to their seats, I noticed my van was riding a little lower than normal. My eyes got wide as I saw that all the tires had been deflated. The good news is that they weren't punctured; just deflated. At least one very brave kid had decided to take advantage of an opportunity and quickly take the valve caps off the tires and push in the valve stems to let out the air. I never did find out who the culprit was, but there must have been at least a hundred witnesses; all of the kids lined up to go onto the field were right there, less than 30 feet from my van. Probably more like 300 direct witnesses. None of them ever divulged (to me) who did it. Even then, it was 30% aggravating and 70% funny, in my opinion.

As the SRO I was able to recognize a lot of the cars the kids drove and whenever a citizen would call to complain about speeding cars driven by teenagers I was usually able to quickly identify them and either talk to them directly or make an effective call to their parents.

As the SRO I had a few parents consult with me, asking for advice about their kids. But sadly, those were few and far between.

I enjoyed being the school resource officer, especially at my old high school where a few of my old teachers were still working. I remember wishing that if I had known back in my high school days that I was going to be back at the school working as a police officer, I would have not been able to resist putting my initials and date in various hidden places on walls or posts here and there.

It was there that I first met teachers explaining to me that the behavioral problems some kids had were real things, like "Intermittent Explosive Disorder" and "Oppositional Defiance Disorder", both of which actually caused me to laugh when I first heard them explained.

As the SRO I got priority for working off-duty security jobs like football games and school dances. I actually had to fight for that one a bit; the sergeant in charge wanted to open it up to any and all of the patrol officers but I was able to easily point out the logic of having the school resource officer work those events: "I know who all the bad kids are and I know who to look out for," which he had to agree made logical sense. I think I worked at literally several dozen high school football games over the years.

The dances were pretty easy to work; occasionally a kid or two would show up drunk, or they'd have alcohol stashed in their cars in plain view. One dance a kid showed up - actually a 20 year old who had graduated a couple years earlier – wearing a nice shirt and tie. "What are you doing back here?" I asked him. "Oh, I'm here as an adult chaperone." Nice try, young man. Seriously, good for you to try at least. But go get lost now, buh bye.

This was back in the days when kids danced still relatively conservatively; without obscenely bumping and grinding on each other. When that started to happen a few years later one of the school principals pretty much shut down the after school dances and limited them to just a prom and tolo each year. I can't say I blamed him, either. The last dance I chaperoned as a parent just a couple years ago I noted the most popular look for the young ladies was slim and short slinky cocktail dresses; a far cry from the poofy and conservative taffeta dresses popular back in my high school years.

At the bigger dances, the photographers always took photos of the parent chaperones and didn't mind including me and whichever other officers I was working with that night, we usually looked like this:





I hung out a bit with the teachers, and mingled with the kids a lot. One time a couple girls came into my office and wanted to know if sex while driving a car was illegal. "Uh, yeah.." I said. "What if it's oral sex?" they asked, giggling and smiling. "Yes, that's totally illegal. It's called embracing while driving," I explained, feeling not comfortable with this topic at all. "Okay well what if the girl is driving (and she pointed to her friend) and she's receiving oral sex?" Trying not to think about it too much, I had to politely tell both of them to get out of my office immediately, announcing an end to that whole conversation.

There was a pottery class at the high school, which drove me crazy because it was a full semester for each course. I don't know why making clay pots warranted a full semester. A week or two or maybe three with the other art classes, sure. Along with oil painting, watercolors, sculpture, charcoal drawing, etc....why does pottery class get a whole stupid course all to itself? Now if the school had a glass blowing course, sure that could be a whole semester.. but clay...pots..? Really? I remember this because the old lady who taught the pottery class was no good at spotting covert marijuana smoking pipes and bongs. She learned though to call me in regularly to inspect the pieces going into or coming out of the kiln. "Uh, yeah, check out this really weird teapot looking thing here," I'd say to her, pointing to a suspicious indentation in the side. "This spot here is very thin and weak, so a kid can poke a hole here and made a carburetor hole. Which means this going to be used to smoke dope, not pour tea." And the pottery teacher would thank me and go confront the student about it. She started using me as a resource after putting a few clay items on public display at the school district headquarters. And some of them clay things were quite clearly creatively designed to be drug paraphernalia. Eventually she retired and the pottery program was cut and all the kilns and clay and tables went away and the room was used for teaching other, much more important things.

In the high school student parking lot, there was a large boulder out by the street that the kids were allowed to paint. It got completely repainted about once a month, or sometimes once a week. Variations of purple and gold were the most common, those being the school colors. On occasion, kids from a rival school would sneak over and paint the rock in their school colors, which of course would never last more than a day or two. One time some presumably Hispanic kids painted a large Mexican national flat on the rock; a day later it was covered over with an even larger American flag. I always thought about cutting into that thing and getting a core sample to see how thick the paint layers on it were, because it has been there going on 50 years now.

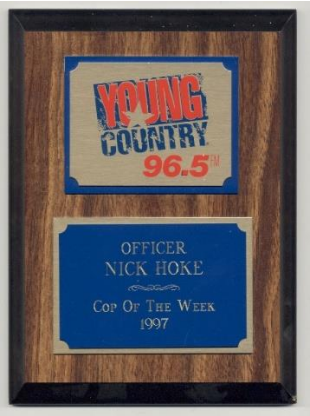
Sometimes the teens would get carried away and after painting "The Rock" they'd spread graffiti out onto the sidewalks or the road or the parking lot but most of them time they behaved themselves and kept the paint just on the rock. It was almost always repainted during the hours of darkness and it is fair to say that I saw that rock in every color scheme imaginable over the years, including one time when the principal's son got extra-creative and glued green Astroturf all over it. When I was working night patrols – especially on warm summer nights – I'd frequently see kids painting the rock. I'd always stop and watch and even light it up for them with my spotlight and high beams. They thought I was just being cool and helpful (which I was) but I was also making sure they painted just the rock and not the sidewalk next to it.

Speaking of relatively harmless pranks, one time at the high school - about 3 weeks before school let out for summer – some kid noticed that a lot of the lockers were getting emptied and unused. So he went to the Central Market grocery store and talked the seafood department out of a large amount of fish heads, which he said he wanted to use for crab bait. The fish heads were put in open plastic bags and set into six of the empty lockers, and he then locked them with padlocks. Nothing happened for the first week. The second week the smell started to spread. The third week the security staff and I were able to zero in on one of the lockers. Fortunately for us, the kid who did that used 6 identical key padlocks and the school security staff and I were able to quickly realize rotting fish head smells were coming from every other locker with that exact same kind of lock. Once the fish heads were gone, the smell cleared up. I was actually disappointed that the prankster (we never caught him) didn't go to the extra effort to use more normal and common dial locks – we would not have been able to pinpoint the offending lockers then so easily.

Every spring the senior class would get a group photo taken on the football field. A professional photographer would be given access to the roof of the stadium/stand, and the 12th graders would spell out the last two digits of the year, like "98" or "99" etc.. I'd usually be up there too, and every year it cracked me up because we'd get the kids in formation and do a big countdown from 10 for the picture. At the end of the countdown, when the kids thought the picture would be taken, most of them broke formation with wild gestures or jumping. Of course all during the countdown the photographer was snapping away getting the real photo; when we got down to the "1" he didn't even bother anymore.



I was popular enough to get nominated and win "Cop of the Week' by a Seattle radio station, they sent me this:



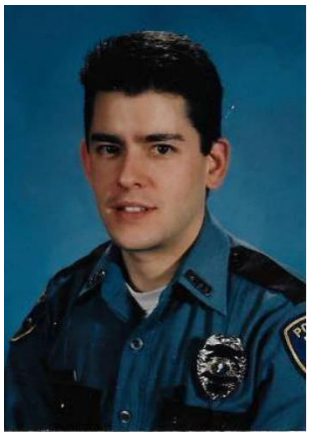


Funny, because I don't listen to country music!

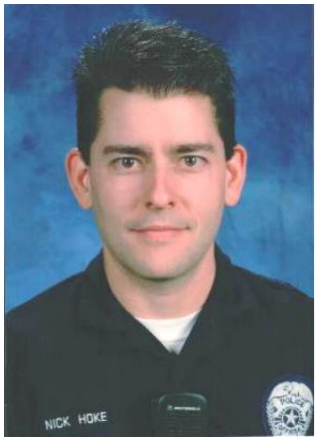
I had some good parking spots for my police car at the school; the best one was in the back near my office. I liked having it close by so if I had to run out to something I could get to it quickly. One of the spots I had was near a route that a lot of kids walked to and from the music building and I discovered that one kid had decided that he needed to spit a big loogie onto one of my side windows every time he walked past. After I narrowed down the time frame that this was apparently happening in, I found a nearby window to peek out of; it was actually for a maintenance room that had a window above their door, which meant I had to get on a stepladder to look out. I wasn't on my stakeout too long before I saw the kids walk by and spit on my car; he was in police custody about ten seconds later and then wound up in the principal's office before being suspended from school for about a week. I still remember his name.

I also remember another kid who used to talk smack to me every once in a while when he walked by in the crowded hallways; he liked making comments about how I wasn't a real cop and only a school cop. One day he made some snide comment about being essentially like a mall cop and I snapped. Not caring that at least a dozen other students were near us, I grabbed him by his collar and pushed him up against a wall. Actually got his feet off the ground, too. I told him in no uncertain words that I was a fully commissioned police officer with full authority to enforce any and all state laws. I can't remember what I actually said (or snarled) to him but I remember his eyes got real wide and it scared him enough that after that he was very respectful to me. This was of course in the days before every kid had a phone that recorded video. Good God if I did that nowadays it would be on youtube in minutes and I'd be put on administrative leave, I'm sure. It was a different time back then!

As a quasi-staff member of the school district, I learned to somewhat brazenly walk in to the photo shoots every year on picture day and got my photo taken as one of the staff members. Nobody invited me, but nobody discouraged me, either. It was uncharted territory back then so I sometimes I made up the rules as a went along. So to this day, in my small box of keepsakes I have a collection of my staff ID cards from different school each year that that I got issued with my name and photo. And because I had my picture taken as a staff member, I got included in all the school's yearbooks.

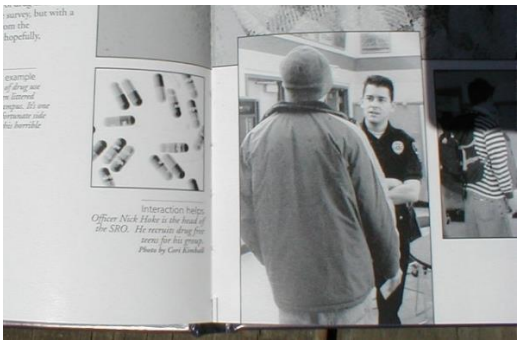








In fact I wound up in a few yearbooks:



Interaction helps. Officer Nick Hoke is the head of the SRO. He recruits drug free teens for his group. Photo by Cori Kimball



NK pride
Officer Nick Hoke, famous around campus, smiles as he shows off his NK Cops board. NK Cops is a program he started this year to promote drug free students.
Photo by Josie Wells

After five years of SRO duty, I'd had enough. It was tough dealing with the screwed up kids but I also had to deal with a lot of their screwed up parents who wanted to complain to the principal, to the superintendent, and to the police chief about that officer in the school who kept arresting their little boy and it was all my fault that their boy had a conviction record. I'd love to say that's an exaggeration but sadly it was true. Some parents blamed me for their kids' arrest records. But in the end it wasn't the crazy kids or the crazy parents that wore me out, it was the crazy school administrators. The high school principal and assistant principals (yes there were two of them) especially weren't always appreciative of my suggestions about school safety and security issues and eventually I got tired of being frustrated too often, especially when they gave too much leniency to kids who deserved more punishment. When I stopped being the SRO another officer took over. He wanted it because his son was going to the school there and he wanted to keep an eye on him, and after that the funding ended when the economy tanked so that was the end of official SRO's for the Poulsbo schools for a few years. Eventually the program came back but I was still not interested; I had determined that I liked being a patrol officer more than a school cop. Like I said, I had done my time in the trenches.

For the rest of my police career I still regularly made visits to the high school and junior high and sometimes even the elementary schools and I stayed on a first name basis with all of the principals and administrators and a lot of staff.

On a side note, one of the great things about Poulsbo being a small town was that virtually all of the troublemaking teenagers who were out of school – either graduated, dropped out, or expelled – usually didn't stick around for too long. Sooner or later they all realized that not only was Poulsbo was too small for them to avoid the police for too long, but it was just too small all around. So they'd all leave for bigger cities. It was really nice to see those problem children grow up and disappear and become somebody else's problem.

Several high school principals later, things improved considerably at the school when a young new principal was hired, this was around 2014. Because he was young (in his 30's!) he had a lot to prove and so he worked hard to clean up the school, which looked a lot like expelling the troublemaking kids instead of keeping them all to boost the attendance numbers and get more federal funding. Getting rid of the slackers and drug addicts made a huge difference; within just a few months they even stopped hanging around the high school lurking in the woods waiting for their friends to come out between classes. I think because most of the friends were also kicked out. Taking school courses online was becoming popular and more easy, so it was not like the bad kids were being completely thrown away in to the wilderness; they all had the opportunity to continue their learning at home. While that principal reigned, the total number of trouble making kids in the whole school at any given time – and I mean the worst of the worst kids – usually numbered around 3. Or about 15 times less than what I had used to deal with.

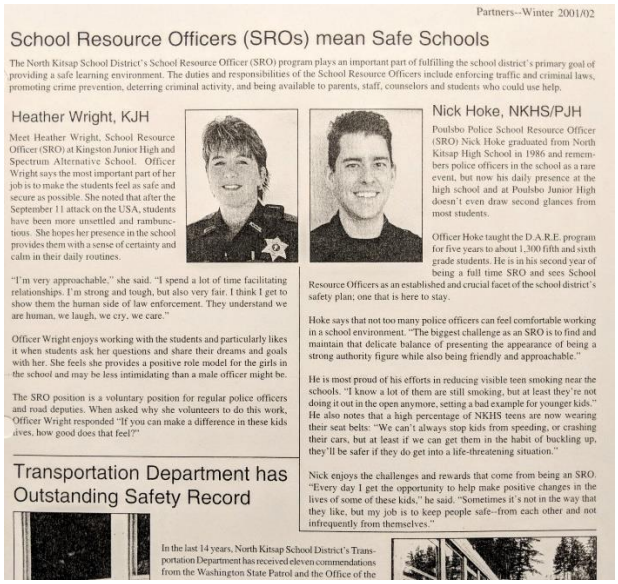


That simple act of cleaning house made a significant positive difference. That, and the ever-increasing price of cigarettes. Once a pack of smokes cost climbed to around 8 bucks I saw a massive decrease in the numbers of kids I was catching smoking near the high school; like across the street in the woods or down the street in the other woods or on the sidewalks a block away. In fact the number of kids I even saw smoking near the school went from dozens a year to virtually zero. It was a beautiful thing.

Then the economic consequences of the Great Recession killed the SRO program for good; neither the PD or the School District could afford to put an officer in the school anymore. But the new principal had done such a good job, they didn't really need an SRO anymore. Of course the school principals still called 911 from time to time to have us chase down or haul the occasional miscreant away but for the most part, the schools in Poulsbo improved in quality considerably. When the economy recovered, SRO positions started getting reinstated again.

A couple years ago I met a woman, she was in her 30's. She squinted at me and said "You used to be that cop at the high school when I was there. I remember you used to try and catch kids smoking in the woods." She took a deep drag on her cigarette that she was holding. "You never caught me though!" she smiled and she filled her lungs again with smoke, feeling proud of herself.

When the school district wanted a levy passed, they mailed a propaganda flyer to all of the local taxpayers, of course it included a fluff piece about school safety and security:



Partners--Winter 2001/02

School Resource Officers (SROs) mean Safe Schools

The North Kitsap School District's School Resource Officer (SRO) program plays an important part of fulfilling the school district's primary goal of providing a safe learning environment. The duties and responsibilities of the School Resource Officers include enforcing traffic and criminal laws, promoting crime prevention, deterring criminal activity, and being available to parents, staff, counselors and students who could use help.

Heather Wright, KJH

Meet Heather Wright, School Resource Officer (SRO) at Kingston Junior High and Spectrum Alternative School. Officer Wright says the most important part of her job is to make the students feel as safe and secure as possible. She noted that after the September 11 attack on the USA, students have been more unsettled and rambunctious. She hopes her presence in the school provides them with a sense of certainty and calm in their daily routines.

"I'm very approachable," she said. "I spend a lot of time facilitating relationships. I'm strong and tough, but also very fair. I think I get to show them the human side of law enforcement. They understand we are human, we laugh, we cry, we care."

Officer Wright enjoys working with the students and particularly likes it when students ask her questions and share their dreams and goals with her. She feels she provides a positive role model for the girls in the school and may be less intimidating than a male officer might be.

The SRO position is a voluntary position for regular police officers and road deputies. When asked why she volunteers to do this work, Officer Wright responded "If you can make a difference in these kids lives, how good does that feel?"

Nick Hoke, NKHS/PJH

Poulsbo Police School Resource Officer (SRO) Nick Hoke graduated from North Kitsap High School in 1986 and remembers police officers in the school as a rare event, but now his daily presence at the high school and at Poulsbo Junior High doesn't even draw second glances from most students.

Officer Hoke taught the D.A.R.E. program for five years to about 1,300 fifth and sixth grade students. He is in his second year of being a full time SRO and sees School Resource Officers as an established and crucial facet of the school district's safety plan; one that is here to stay.

Hoke says that not too many police officers can feel comfortable working in a school environment. "The biggest challenge as an SRO is to find and maintain that delicate balance of presenting the appearance of being a strong authority figure while also being friendly and approachable."

He is most proud of his efforts in reducing visible teen smoking near the schools. "I know a lot of them are still smoking, but at least they're not doing it out in the open anymore, setting a bad example for younger kids." He also notes that a high percentage of NKHS teens are now wearing their seat belts: "We can't always stop kids from speeding, or crashing their cars, but at least if we can get them in the habit of buckling up, they'll be safer if they do get into a life-threatening situation."

Nick enjoys the challenges and rewards that come from being an SRO. "Every day I get the opportunity to help make positive changes in the lives of some of these kids," he said. "Sometimes it's not in the way that they like, but my job is to keep people safe--from each other and not infrequently from themselves."

Transportation Department has Outstanding Safety Record

In the last 14 years, North Kitsap School District's Transportation Department has received eleven commendations from the Washington State Patrol and the Office of the

Because I had been a DARE Officer and an SRO Officer, I was the go-to-guy for hosting tours of the police department. Boys scouts, cub scouts, girl scouts, Brownies, pre-school groups, home-school groups, etc. etc.







Here's what I looked like rounding up three desperados; if I remember correctly it was after finding out three little rascals in the high school had warrants for probation violations. Off to Juvie we go!

Officially it was called the "Youth Service Center." I went there a lot. Remember, this was back in the days before the internet was invented and so kids had to make their own fun; none of them had cell phones or social media and console video games could not play multiplayer yet and there was no social media or fortnite, so kids met up in person with each other a lot more, and got into a significantly higher rates of criminal mischief than they do nowadays.

In fact, the juvenile delinquency rate – at least in my observable corner of the world – has dropped very dramatically in the past twenty years. And I attribute about 90% of that to the internet. It's much easier for kids to talk smack to each other via snapchat now; they don't have to meet up in parks and face off and get in fights and smackdowns. Also it seems like less teens have drivers licenses than in the old days. The differences between then and now is really quite remarkable, actually.





The juvenile detention center, as I liked to point out to miscreants, was built virtually exactly like a "real" jail; the only discernable difference in there was the age of the prisoners. Here's the outside, after, driving in through the intercom-controlled security door/gate.





Oh you thought me cleaning house by hooking up three kids at one time was impressive? How about four?



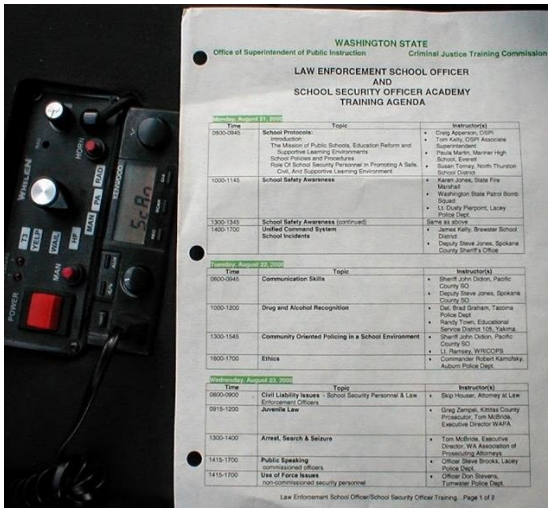
17 years later I looked up that kid there in the middle; he was in the local jail on 8 new felony charges, awaiting a prison sentence. How many times did he get handcuffed between me here and his current booking by other officers and deputies? About thirty times. So don't feel bad for him; he was rotten long before I got to him. I'm pretty sure two of the other teens in this photo also did time in adult prisons. Not jail, but prison.

So. This concludes my the short version of my SRO years. I'll end with some random doggo pix:





And a School Resource Officer training course outline from the year 2000, and an old news article:



WASHINGTON STATE
Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction — Criminal Justice Training Commission

LAW ENFORCEMENT SCHOOL OFFICER
AND
SCHOOL SECURITY OFFICER ACADEMY
TRAINING AGENDA

Monday, August 21, 2000

Time	Topic	Instructor(s)
0800-0845	School Protocols: Introduction The Mission of Public Schools, Education Reform and Supportive Learning Environments School Policies and Procedures Role Of School Security Personnel in Promoting A Safe, Civil, And Supportive Learning Environment	• Craig Apperson, OSPI • Tom Kelly, OSPI Associate Superintendent • Paula Martin, Mariner High School, Everett • Susan Tomey, North Thurston School District
1000-1145	School Safety Awareness	• Karen Jones, State Fire Marshal • Washington State Patrol Bomb Squad • Lt. Dusty Pierpont, Lacey Police Dept.
1300-1345	School Safety Awareness (continued)	Same as above
1400-1700	Unified Command System School Incidents	• James Kelly, Brewster School District • Deputy Steve Jones, Spokane County Sheriff's Office

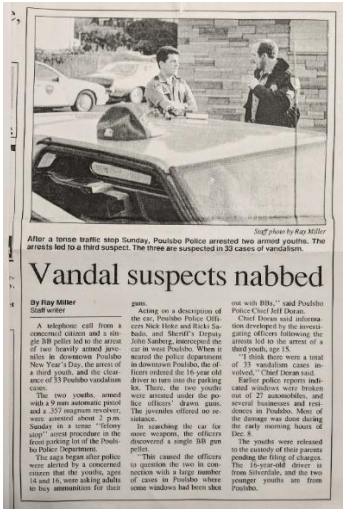
Tuesday, August 22, 2000

Time	Topic	Instructor(s)
0800-0845	Communication Skills	• Sheriff John Didon, Pacific County SO • Deputy Steve Jones, Spokane County SO
1000-1200	Drug and Alcohol Recognition	• Det. Brad Graham, Tacoma Police Dept. • Randy Town, Educational Service District 105, Yakima
1300-1545	Community Oriented Policing in a School Environment	• Sheriff John Didon, Pacific County SO • Lt. Ramsey, WTECOPS
1600-1700	Ethics	• Commander Robert Kamutsky, Auburn Police Dept.

Wednesday, August 23, 2000

Time	Topic	Instructor(s)
0800-0900	Civil Liability Issues - School Security Personnel & Law Enforcement Officers	• Skip Houser, Attorney at Law
0915-1200	Juvenile Law	• Greg Zempel, Kittitas County Prosecutor, Tom McBride, Executive Director WAPA
1300-1400	Arrest, Search & Seizure	• Tom McBride, Executive Director, WA Association of Prosecuting Attorneys
1415-1700	Public Speaking commissioned officers	• Officer Steve Brooks, Lacey Police Dept.
1415-1700	Use of Force Issues non-commissioned security personnel	• Officer Don Stevens, Tumwater Police Dept.

Law Enforcement School Officer/School Security Officer Training - Page 1 of 2



Staff photo by Ray Miller

After a tense traffic stop Sunday, Poulsbo Police arrested two armed youths. The arrests led to a third suspect. The three are suspected in 33 cases of vandalism.

Vandal suspects nabbed

By Ray Miller
Staff writer

A telephone call from a concerned citizen and a single BB pellet led to the arrest of two heavily armed juveniles in downtown Poulsbo New Year's Day, the arrest of a third youth, and the clearance of 33 Poulsbo vandalism cases.

The two youths, armed with a 9 mm automatic pistol and a .357 magnum revolver, were arrested about 2 p.m. Sunday in a tense "felony stop" arrest procedure in the front parking lot of the Poulsbo Police Department.

The saga began after police were alerted by a concerned citizen that the youths, ages 14 and 16, were asking adults to buy ammunition for their guns.

Acting on a description of the car, Poulsbo Police Officers Nick Hoke and Ricki Sabado, and Sheriff's Deputy John Sanberg, intercepted the car in west Poulsbo. When it neared the police department in downtown Poulsbo, the officers ordered the 16-year old driver to turn into the parking lot. There, the two youths were arrested under the police officers' drawn guns. The juveniles offered no resistance.

In searching the car for more weapons, the officers discovered a single BB gun pellet.

"This caused the officers to question the two in connection with a large number of cases in Poulsbo where some windows had been shot out with BBs," said Poulsbo Police Chief Jeff Doran.

Chief Doran said information developed by the investigating officers following the arrests led to the arrest of a third youth, age 15.

"I think there were a total of 33 vandalism cases involved," Chief Doran said.

Earlier police reports indicated windows were broken out of 27 automobiles, and several businesses and residences in Poulsbo. Most of the damage was done during the early morning hours of Dec. 8.

The youths were released to the custody of their parents pending the filing of charges. The 16-year-old driver is from Silverdale, and the two younger youths are from Poulsbo.

K9

One of my most rewarding assignments during my police career was as the police department's Narcotic Detection K9 Handler.

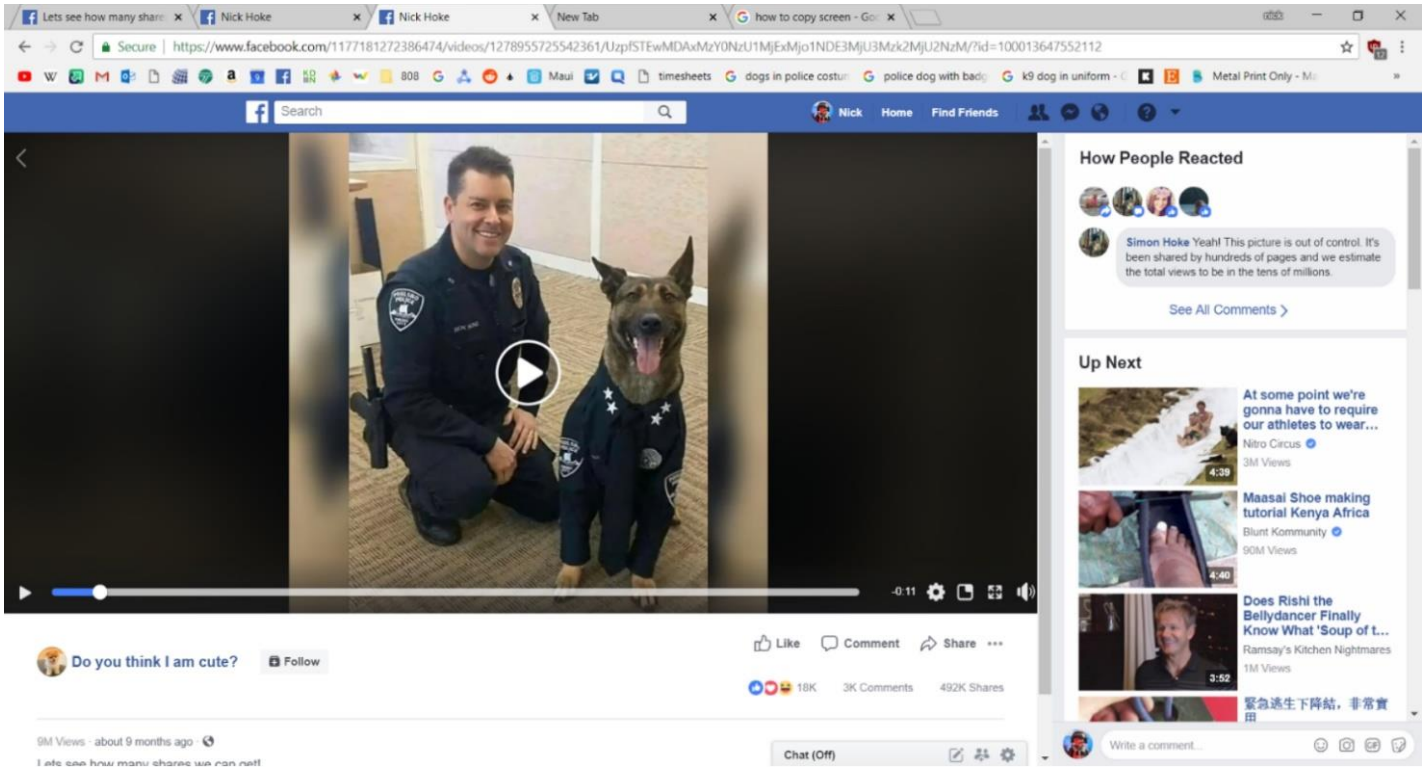


This photo was kind of famous. Here we see Kilo wearing a shirt that used to belong to Chief Doran. For some reason long after the chief retired we still had his shirt hanging around in the locker room so one day I decided to repurpose it. City hall 2nd floor clerk Helen had some sewing skills and she modified it to fit Kilo; the sleeves were shortened, and she made the shirt open from the back with Velcro, which is of course the easiest way to put a shirt on a dog. The shirt looked great on the dog when it was sitting, and sitting only. In this pic he's modeling the latest tailored modification, to include some ridiculously large iron-on stars I got for his collar.

A few weeks after this pic was taken in 2016, Simon uploaded it to Reddit at a police officers-only page and at some point after that somebody reposted it and then it got loose on the internets and it then started popping in different places, most of which I never found out about. Within just a couple years the total number of different websites it showed up on was in the hundreds, - yes literally in the hundreds - including a lot of Pinterest and Instagram and LinkedIn (?!?) and Twitter and Tumblr pages and a lot of the popular websites back then like Chive and Ebaumsworld and several places on Imgur, where there was a helpful view counter on one that showed over 600,000 views in just a few months which I thought was pretty darn cool and impressive. And then it started showing up on facebook and the view count started getting really interesting: Sometimes it was just a photo, and sometimes it showed up as a 30 second still video. Or a 15-second video. The video format was I think so the views could be tracked and counted by whomever posted it, because photo views were not counted. I saw some Facebook pages where this photo collected 300,000 views, 56,000 "likes" and 30,000 "shares" and 3,400 comments within just a couple weeks.

With all that sharing, it then got reposted on other Facebook pages of course, most of them which I never found out about because I had just gotten around to signing up on Facebook around then. I know it showed up on Facebook pages about dogs, and pages about working dogs, and police, and also on some real random pages places like "Homemaking Tips" which Susan jokingly called "bored housewives." One time a corrections officer at the local jail told me casually that he had seen the photo on some police Facebook page awhile back, but he couldn't remember which one, but it was police officer related. So I have no clue how many views or likes that one got, but since that page was for police supporters and friends it was most likely pretty high. I'm also sad I missed out on that one because the comments probably would have been more sensible and articulate there than on most of the other pages, where a lot of people questioned how could the dog be a police officer if it can't swear an oath and those sleeves look dangerous to run in and why does the dog clearly outrank the officer and how does the dog run wearing a tie and he's going to overheat and dogs shouldn't be used by police anyway and on and on. But actually most of the comments were overwhelming positive; I'd say about 99% of the commenters were just delighted and thrilled with the photo.

One time we found out about a Facebook posting when one of Susan's old friends – a classmate from her high school in Pendleton, Oregon – just happened to share it on his Facebook page and then Susan saw it. Her old classmate of course had no idea who the cop and who the dog was, he just thought it was a cool picture and Susan was all like "Oh hey guess what I know these guys!!" On that page that he had shared it from, the view count increased by 5,000 to 8,000 PER HOUR for the first two weeks, until slowing down to 1,000 per hour for about a week, then ending with (only) 100 views per hour. Final count after just a month, when it was then suddenly, unexpectedly, and unceremoniously expired and removed forever: 1,341,839 views.



Sometimes people I knew would send me a link when they saw it on "Housekeeping 101", for example – where 800,000 people viewed it in less than 2 weeks and 32,000 of them then shared it with other people and who knows how many other Facebook pages it then appeared on which like I said I had no idea about. But it's very safe to assume that on some of those pages it must have certainly collected well over a million more views each. I can say that because one of those pages brought to my attention had posted this pic about a week before I found it and when I first saw it there were about 3 million views so far. And it was collecting new views at the rate of – hang on to your hats – 800 views per minute. That pace continued for another week before slowly tapering down. It was quite an entertaining diversion for me to bookmark that page and refresh it every few minutes. I kept notes and I kept yelling out excitedly to the boys or Susan "Hey! Another TWELVE THOUSAND people looked at this photo just in the last FIFTEEN MINUTES!!" and "Hey! Uh.. In the last two hours, enough people saw this photo to completely fill Wembley Stadium!" Neither of those statements are exaggerations, by the way; the total view count was going up by over a million every day. Yes, over a million people every day. Too bad no residuals or royalty payments for me. Tragically, the photo completely disappeared from that Facebook site suddenly in week three, which was quite disappointing because it was completely outranking every other post on their page by orders of magnitude and the numbers while slowing were still coming in and the last time I saw it, the total view count was an insane 7.1 million. If you consider that some of those viewers most certainly had some spouses or roommates or coworkers nearby who were called over to "hey come over here and look at this photo of a cop and a police dog wearing a police shirt!" then the total number of people who actually saw the photo just on that one page would of course be well over 7.1 million; probably closer to 8, 9, or 10 million?

I was able to regularly search the original photo on Google Image Search; a typical result would yield about 30 or 40 different websites it was currently seen on. One time for some reason it showed me some Facebook links, mostly from foreign countries. I'm talking Asia, and Europe and I think some in Africa– I could tell for sure some were in Thailand and Romania and Australia and Japan; there were also more than few from the Ukraine/Russia, Vietnam, Croatia, Slovakia, France and Italy, Greece, Czechoslovakia, China. Considering how many millions of times it was shared it's fair to guess it popped up on screens in in dozens and dozens of different countries.

There were some other Facebook pages that I just happened to see this picture on; although like I said most of the postings eluded my attention, due in no small part to the fact that I had only 55 or so facebook "friends" and so my connections were rather limited and even up the year 2018 it was still unfortunately impossible to search the world of Facebook for specific photos.

So. How many people total, worldwide, saw this picture? I have no clue because Facebook didn't have a picture search feature and I have no idea how many times it got posted that escaped my attention. But I feel confident (and conservative) by saying in the first year it started showing up, probably twenty million people saw it. A few years later, who knows, that number could easily be doubled. Which is completely mind boggling, if you think about it.

It also prompted more than a few phone calls to the Poulsbo city hall and the police department; some folks studied the photo enough to figure out what police department were with and they were interested enough to call and ask about Kilo's shirt and wanted details. We got calls literally from all over the country, for years afterward. One lady was so smitten she knitted a giant custom yarn blanket for us, which I donated to the PPD to hang on a wall.

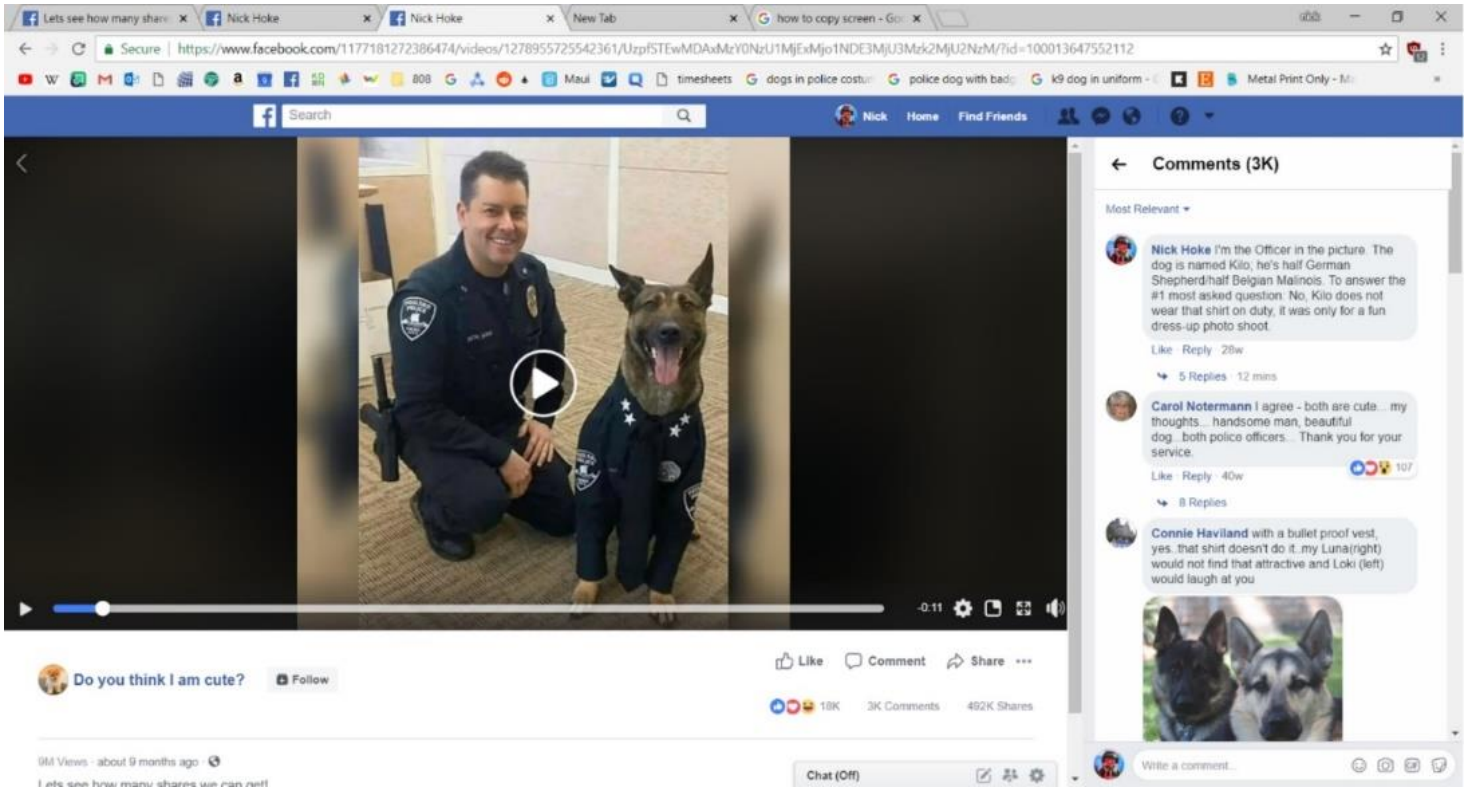
For years, I heard from completely random people about it; like when the local librarian told me her uncle in Minnesota had seen it and thought of her, since she worked in Poulsbo, or when a random public works employee mentioned his mother in Pennsylvania had shared the photo with him, and even once a nurse at my colonoscopy prep room recognized me.

That photo was the one and only time Kilo really posed in that shirt. If I had known it was going to become so freaking famous I would have changed a few things about it – for instance, his nametag isn't really visible and I feel pretty sure that if everybody could see his name was KILO then the view count would have certainly gone up because of the "aww lookit that" cuteness factor - but all things considered, since this photo is clearly my lasting legacy on the world wide web, I'm okay with how it turned out.

I took some notes for posterity. Here are some of the Facebook pages that came to my attention, circa 2016-2018. This first section has the pages/posts where the photo presented as a video format, to activate a total view counter:

Fb page	**comments**	**likes**	**shares**	**views**
Homemaking Tips:	906	19,322	5,691	882,843
NORA TV	608	4,031	77,964	1,341,489
Do you think I am cute?	3,302	18,486	492,975	9,032,070
Housekeeping 101:	1,525	33,522	333,410	7,200,219

The "Do You Think I Am Cute" site gained another million views long after I thought it had peaked; when the view count slowed to a near stop I stopped following it. A few months later I checked in again and saw it had rallied somehow for some reason, so I had to come back and revise the stats here again. And then again about a year after first posted, it gained another 75,000 views, probably because the number of shares was close to half a million.



Next: some more of the pages that I found, that had the picture in a JPEG format, with no known total view count. (I'll bet the total number of Facebook pages the photo appeared on was easily five or 10 times longer than this – these are only the pages I found out about, starting a couple years after the first posting)

Fb page name	**comments**	**likes**	**shares**	**followers**
Puppies Way	89	2,255	718	1,078,932
Flamur	116	1,186	2,075	333,642
Support Police K9	106	1,898	967	206,790
German Shepherd Lovers	436	11,454	4,198	930,251
NTD Australia	524	12,104	7,012	1,179,318
NTD 7-2017	2,091	64,412	20,211	unknown
Hero Viral Animals	5,898	91,276	57,176	unknown
NTD Life	5,031	105,321	74,576	16,130,247
Viral About 11-16	1,900	20,648	308,565	131,232
The Epoch Times (Taiwan)	25	340	42	unknown
Sinful Good Fun (Slovakia)	4	302	19	unknown
BL Mundo/ Bellezas de la Vida	385	6,267	1,445	(Spain, I think)
Congratulations and greetings	44	1,015	52	(Slovakia) 164,480
My Dog is Member of the Family	790	6,349	1,417	(France)
Corner of Relaxation	159	18,120	438	(Vietnam)
The Beauty of Romania	434	8,475	1,308	unknown
U.S. Police Officers	44	778	424	92,362
Police Times	40	230	25	152,727
PuppiesLovers	535	10,013	6,965	5,717,748
World USA	554	1,626	411	887,366
Art & Food	20	175	1,132	490,587
Inspire Uplift	717	5,172	791	4,435,894
Support Police K9	105	1,844	964	207,332
Beans and Cornbread	35	607	135	325,569
World USA	555	1,637	411	894,571
PuppiesWoof	101	2,851	671	1,012,122
Soul-Lifting Beauties (Hungary)	199	2,636	260	246,838

So…do we have enough data to extrapolate and make any educated guess about the view counts for the pages with the picture in a JPEG format? ..If it helps, the NTD Australia page had 1,09,195 followers, and the NTD Life page had over 15,759,105 people following it. We know how many shares, and how many likes, but we don't know the total views. But if 15,759,105 people follow that page, and if say, half of them saw the photo, then that's..well..a lot. The last time I checked, the photo is still (of course) all over the innernets, and probably will be who knows how long. So that was definitely my 15 minutes' worth of fame. Crazy, huh?

Ok let's go back to the beginning and see how this all started.. The PPD's first K9, in 1998, was a black lab named Cole. He had two handlers; when the first one (John Halsted) got promoted to an undercover detective position after a couple years, the dog got transferred to his second handler (Dan La France), who worked with him for another 7 years.





After Cole's retirement, a third officer took over; Officer Jay Gillen. Jay was a transfer/lateral hire from the Port Gamble Tribal Police and he already had a K9 partner there, which was allowed to come with him. His dog was a big fluffy German Shepard named Aiko. When Aiko retired, a new pupper named Kaiser was in the lineup but the K9 position was suddenly cut when the recession hit us hard and Chief Swiney the Hun cancelled the whole program, starting a 5 year period with no department dog. Later when that Chief was gone and 2014 came around, our police dog program was reinstated when the then-new chief (Al Townsend) convinced the mayor and city council to fund a canine team again.

Before Townsend's new dog program got started officially, I got a heads up from one of the sergeants who called me into his office one day. He told me "The new chief is going to talk the mayor and council into reinstating our canine program." "Oh that's cool," I said. He looked up from his paperwork at me. "You could be our new canine handler, if you want." I was silent and realized that although I had never really thought about that before, it did sound interesting. "Think about it," he said. And so I went home and thought about it for a long time. I knew that having a dog partner would be a pretty huge commitment. It would mean that I would be responsible for not just myself but for a partner that I would have to be watch over and keep track of nonstop, every day. In hot days I'd have to make sure the dog didn't overheat, and on cold days I'd have to make sure it was warm, and there would be water breaks and potty breaks and I'd have to put him on and off the leash every time I got him out of the car, and when he went places with me out of the car I'd have to hold the doors open for him and make sure other dogs didn't walk up to us make sure little kids didn't pull his tail and on and on etc. etc.

I carefully weighed the pros and cons and finally decided that it would be a fun challenge to undertake for the last third of my career. Also, I had vowed that I was not going to turn into one of those lazy old cops who let all the new guys do all the work; the kind of guy who was "retired on duty" and just coasted the last several years doing as little work as possible. No, I wanted to stay productive and leave a lasting good impression, and I knew this collateral duty would help keep me busy.

So after a lot of careful deliberation I decided to go for it. I submitted the required letter of interest, but with a twist: I stipulated two conditions that I wanted met. One, I wanted a good looking, official-looking special dog. Not a stupid looking dog. I wanted a dog with Command Presence! Some kind of a good looking black or yellow Labrador Retriever that could double as a model for an L.L. Bean or Cabela's catalog, you know? The other condition I stated was that I didn't want to have to switch to a night shift and work in the dark. The sergeants and chief discussed it and both conditions were agreed upon, and I was selected as the next department's K9 Handler, which turned out to a pretty exciting time in my police career.

Our source for a new dog was a professional dog trainer lady who lived across Puget Sound in Arlington. We signed a contract with her, sent her $7,000 dollars, and waited for her to find a good dog for us. And we waited. The weeks turned to months, and we kept waiting, because there was a significant disparity between the supply and demand in the police K9 world at that time in Washington, due to the fact that marijuana had just been legalized for anybody over 21 and it was no longer an illegal drug anymore. Which created problems for police drug dog and handlers, because they had all been trained to sniff out marijuana along with the other serious drugs like heroin and cocaine. Now you may not know this, but dogs can't tell their handlers what exactly they're smelling; they're all trained to give an alert to whatever illegal drugs they're trained to detect and there is no way really that their handlers have a clue which exact drug it is that the dog may be detecting and alerting to. Every K9 handler in the state then faced a challenge: what happens when their dog alerts to an odor source, like a drug dealer's car, and it turns out that the only drug in there is marijuana? Which is actually legal? Actually, the fear was, among police chiefs and sheriffs and prosecutors especially, was that a drug dog was sooner or later was going to sniff and alert on a drug house or a car or something, the cops would find massive amounts of cocaine or heroin or something, and a competent defense attorney would argue in court

that the dog was alerting to marijuana also present that was not illegal and therefore the police seizure and search and subsequent discovery of any other illegal anything was in fact not a legal search and then the case would be dismissed by the judge. So a lot of police departments and sheriffs decided to retire their current drug dogs and get new ones. New ones that would be trained to completely ignore marijuana and treat it like nothing special. Because once you train a dog to alert to a specific odor, it is very difficult to untrain the dog and be able to be sure enough to testify in court that the dog had definitely not alerted to that smell it had been originally trained to alert on. So there was a huge demand for fresh new dogs to train and it created a state-wide shortage.

The trainer lady kept telling us "I'm going to find you a great dog. Only the best. I know you're ready for one right now, but I'm not going to settle for just a good dog, you're going to get only the best," she kept assuring us. After about 8 months though we got tired of waiting and we cancelled our contract with her and got our money back. Back to square one, as they say.

So I went on the interwebs and started doing some research to see what other options we had for finding a drug dog source. I looked for other dog trainers in Washington, then I started looking in Oregon, and California, and then I found a website for "Southern Coast K9" in California. They currently had 54 (!!) dogs in stock; all handpicked from strong European bloodlines. Then I saw the training facility was actually in, uh..Florida, which was literally just about as far from Poulsbo as one could get. But the more I looked at their website, the more excited I got. They were a world-class training facility, and did I mention they had 54 European working dogs in their kennels ready to go? The question was…would the department pay for me to go to a K9 school 3,000 miles away? 6,000 miles round trip?!?

Short answer: yes. It helped when I explained to the sergeant in charge of the K-9 program that I had found a good source for dogs. Then I enticed him by suggesting that if he sent me to Florida to get the dog and the training, he might also need to come along too, to, you know…"supervise" and hang out. My suggestion totally worked; he loved the idea. Actually, he decided to skip the two weeks of watching me train part; instead he quickly convinced the Chief to send him there first to scout the place out and pick a dog. Of course I really wanted to pick out the dog, but the Sergeant pulled rank and I couldn't complain too much because it was a done deal and I'd follow about a month later. Within a week, Sgt. Halsted had flown out there, rented a car and a hotel room, and got a tour of the kennels. He liked what he saw and the trainers there brought out a bunch of dogs for him to look over. He picked one out for us and left a check for $10,000 dollars with the trainers, who started training the dog to detect street drug odors. With specific instructions to exclude marijuana training.





The dog was a two year old Belgian Malinois/German Shephard mix that that had arrived from Germany just a month earlier. Although I had been envisioning a floppy-eared lab, I was not disappointed with a pointy-eared dog, because the one selected definitely had the Command Presence I wanted. I was quite pleased with the Sergeant's pick. A couple weeks later I flew down there and started learning how to be a K9 handler.

Actually, let me back up a bit here. When I first got assigned as the department's next K9 Handler, there was that really long period of time where I was dogless, waiting for a partner. But while I was waiting I was also getting ready, and I was going to trainings to prepare me. The first special course I attended was in Eastern Washington; a three day Washington State Patrol sponsored training in highway drug interdiction, which is what it's called when the police intercept and stop drug smugglers on the road.

The students in the class were cops from a dozen other agencies across the state. Like all the other police trainings I attended, the room was full of testosterone and sunglasses and big guys casually posturing and walking around with a swagger, carrying their badges and guns on their off-duty belts.

There was classroom training and lectures about how to find hidden compartments in vehicles; any car can have dozens of different places to conceal things; some small and some huge.

The training included several prepared junker demo cars that had hidden compartments in them; we were set loose on them in groups and tasked to find all the hidden things. For some of the cars the instructors gave us screwdrivers and on others we had to pry parts open with just our bare hands.

We pulled out bundles of fake money and plastic handguns and duct taped packages of simulated bundles of drugs. "Found another one!" we'd say with grins as we pulled interior door panels out from the frames and hold up a gun. Afterward the instructor counted the total and said "Well you got them all except for the meth hidden under the hood. But that's okay, nobody ever finds that one." We crowded around him as he pointed into the engine compartment. "You see that hose there?" We peered into the engine and saw that he was directing our attention to a large corrugated flexible duct hose. It was black and coated with a fine layer of dust and dirt, and it looked like every other thing in there, like the starter motor, the fan belt, the alternator, the radiator, and the mess of other random electrical cables and pipes.

He reached in and pulled out the hose, which was about 3 feet long and not connected on either end to anything. "How much stuff could somebody put into a fake hose like this?" I was impressed.





While I was there, a local TV station showed up to film a segment for their local news that night; I showed up quite clearly on their segment with my black t-shirt I had found in Hawaii a few months earlier on vacation; it had a huge marijuana leaf on it and some witty saying I can't remember what exactly; I thought it would be not inappropriate now that marijuana was legal in the state.

Another instructor, who was an interdiction state police trooper in a Southern state, told us a very interesting story. It is in fact one of the best stories I've ever heard so I'll include it here. This would make a great movie. Maybe it will be one someday. "I teach this course all over the country," he said one day. "Let me tell you about this guy I know." He didn't tell us exactly how he met him, but he had met him several times and knew this guy had a very special secret.

This guy (we'll call him "Steve" so I don't keep calling him "this guy") owned an auto repair shop. It was in New Mexico. Or Arizona. Or California. Maybe Texas. Doesn't matter, it was in a state very close to Mexico. Now Steve used to be a criminal but he had reformed himself at some point like some criminals actually do and he was making an honest living, owning and operating his own auto repair business. He had started a family and was no longer involved in any criminal activity. But his past came back to haunt him; one day some shady characters showed up with a couple of newer cars that appeared to be in very good condition. "We need you to put some hidden compartments in these," the guys said. They didn't need to tell him that the hidden compartments were going to be for smuggling drugs. The shop owner Steve was surprised because he had gotten out of that line of work and he did not like the looks of these customers; they looked like bad news. "I don't do that anymore." he told them. "We are not asking you," was their reply. "We will pay $5,000 per car, and we'll be back in a week." They stared at him and he realized his worst suspicion was true; they were working for a cartel drug lord in Mexico and he did indeed not have the option to refuse them service. He also realized that these two cars would probably be only just the beginning. The money was good but Steve wanted no part of the drug cartels; because back in those days (2013) there were numerous drug lords with networks of hundreds and thousands of drug smugglers and dealers and assassins working for them and it was a very dangerous business to be in; cartel members were regularly killing and beheading their competitors at every chance they got. It was an extremely bloody business.

Steve knew he had no choice so he moved the cars into his back shop and told his employees that he would be working on them himself and they needed to stay away. They all knew exactly what he was doing, but they didn't know he was doing it unwillingly; they all presumed he had chosen to get back into some dirty work. A week later the cars were ready, the bad guys came back, gave Steve ten grand in cash, and they took the cars, being quite pleased with the job. Because Steve was good. He was in fact really, really good at constructing secret hidden compartments. That's why they went to him; I guess he had prior experience in

that sort of work. The compartments had concealed door panels that would unlock and pop open only when a certain combination of electrical input signals in the right order unlocked them, and on every car it was always something different. It was usually something like the driver would have to push the switch to open the right rear window, then hit the switch for the interior cabin light, then pump the brake pedal twice, and then unlock the front doors. Then the secret latch would pop open somewhere and the bad guys could remove a door panel that was so expertly built-in that it would be impossible to find, like in the side of a door or under a seat or behind a seat or in the dashboard or wherever. That's the kind of work Steve did.

And so the bad guys started bringing in more cars every week for more work. The cars were all different makes, models, and colors, but most of them were newer cars that did not fit the usual look of being a drug smuggling kind of a car. Now what makes this story so interesting is that before the first cars were finished, Steve went to the nearest federal DEA office he could find, and he explained to some federal agents that he had been forced to essentially join a drug cartel as a contracted agent. He explained to the agents that he didn't want to be in this line of work but he had no choice. He then suggested that he was suddenly in a perfect position to actually help out in the war on drugs, because since he was tearing these cars open and putting hidden secret compartments in them, he would be able, if the feds wanted him, to install secrets GPS trackers in there, too. There was much discussion and the federal agents agreed that would be awesome. Now this was a huge risk and Steve didn't want to just do this for nothing, so he was able to strike a very special deal with the US Government. First, the cash money he was receiving from the drug cartels would be kept secret. I don't know how much red tape was involved but in the end this guy got a very, very special secret exemption from the IRS; in which they agreed to not audit his business or his personal taxes and let him keep any cash that found its way into his pockets.

So the feds gave him some special GPS tracking units; very small sealed things that were disguised to look like innocuous car parts if they were ever to be found buried deep inside the cars. Which they wouldn't, because this guy was able to hide one per car where nobody would ever find them and even if they did they would think it was some normal car part or component that had been installed in the new car factory production line. So now at the time I heard this story, Steve was still active, making hidden compartments in cars for drug cartels. And so each car was being tracked 24/7 in real time by somebody at the DEA or some other anti-narcotic organization. Somewhere, behind a lot of closed and locked doors, somebody was sitting in front of a computer screen that showed the locations of each and every one of those cars. Most left Mexico with a load of drugs hidden in them, crossed the border into the US somewhere, and after their delivery they would return to Mexico with cash stuffed into the same secret compartments.

Occasionally the agents in charge of tracking these cars would gather enough intelligence from other sources to determine when it would be a good time to stop one of the cars while they were moving and seize it. I suppose when the cash loads were significant enough, the agents would carefully swoop in on that car and pull it over on an interstate or at a truck stop, and make it look like a random local stop that just happened to get lucky by busting a driver who just happened to have a massive amount of cash, like hundreds of thousands of dollars, hidden in his car. It was important to not stop too many of the cars though, otherwise it might start to look suspicious. This was still going on when I heard about it. Steve was enjoying life because he had the best of both worlds; immunity from the police, and steady cash coming in from the drug cartels. And as a bonus, Steve also got a cut of the profits when the cars were caught with cash in them. So it sounded pretty lucrative, but Steve was really playing with fire because of course if the drug lords ever found out about what he was doing he would be so dead. Actually he'd be tortured first for a very long time, and then dead. Now I don't know how this story ends because that's all I ever heard about it. Pretty good story, huh?

Alright back to my K9 training: I found a lot of books about working dogs at the local library and I read them, and I also started hanging around other K9 officers and went to their trainings to see how things worked. Most of the trainings were in the Seattle area where cops from police departments and sheriff's offices got together to keep their skills sharp. They hid drugs in different places and the other K9 units took turns sniffing them out. The usual training areas were storage locker rental units, or junkyards full of cars. I got to see how different officers handled their dogs, and the officers or deputies in charge of the training would explain to me how the K9 units were doing things well, or wrong, and they'd point things out to me while we watched them work, like tactics and techniques and tips.







And one time I went to a K9 training at the Washington State Patrol's headquarters where they kept all their old police cars, and also where they outfitted their new cars. Both operations were interesting; I talked to the civilian mechanics there who explained to me that they set up over 300 new police cars annually. Meaning they got the cars from the factory and then they added the police radios, the lightbars and extra emergency lighting, and the computer system, push bars in the front, partition in the middle, strobe lights in the corners, graphics on the side, etc. One of the guys there told me that they had an efficiency expert come in recently and he showed them how they could save time on the installation process by reorganizing where they kept their parts and supplies and so they set up a system to literally line up everything in the right order so all the parts and pieces would be ready at the right time. So before, it took 19 hours of labor to install everything and get a car ready. After they figured out how to order and line up all the equipment the best way, they were down to 15 hours total per car. Times that by 300 and you're talking about some significant time and money savings.





The training there was with a bunch of state patrol troopers and their dogs; we spent a day sniffing out hidden drugs in the old patrol car junkyard. Actually I just watched since I didn't have a dog yet; but watching other handlers is a very good way to learn about the craft. The place there had a combination of cars retired from old age and cars that had been in collisions or accidents, and most of them had been gutted or had parts removed to repair other cars. The place was very interesting; there were literally hundreds of old police cars there. And they also kept the state police SWAT vehicles on standby by there.









Okay so in August of 2014 I flew into Orlando Florida, got a rental car and found my way over to New Smyrna Beach where the Southern Coast K9 Training Center was located. It was run by a retired Florida cop named Bill Heiser, and he had several professional dog trainers working for him. Once or twice a month a new group of student officers would show up to get a two week course in basic dog handling. Southern Coast K9 was just a little north of Daytona. Almost every afternoon it poured torrentially for an hour or two, complete with huge clouds and thunder and lightning.







The group of officers I was in included a guy who was working as a bomb dog handler at The Strategic Petroleum Reserve fuel depot in Louisiana, and there was a drug dog officer from Tennessee, and a sheriff's deputy from Georgia, and two guys who were federal Customs Agents at American Samoa, way waaaaaayyyy West of Hawaii. I had thought for sure I would get a "farthest travelled" award but those guys had me beat considerably.



Bill personally went to Germany several times a year to hand pick dogs from breeders there. The attraction of European dogs was that they were all bred very carefully and had bloodlines superior to American dogs, in a general sense. Which meant virtually none of them got degenerative hip Dysplasia problems or other common overbreeding health issues.

While I was there in New Smyrna Beach a dog trainer from the Netherlands showed up. He had brought 3 floppy eared labs with him that he wanted to sell to Bill, I think the going rate was $5,000 each. They were good looking dogs but Bill had to test each dog, because he wanted only the best and he wanted to be sure they were the best. One of the tests was seeing how readily the dogs would jump up onto furniture, like dressers and counters. "Drug dogs need to be agile and have no reservations about jumping all over the place when they hunt down drug odors" he explained to me while he watched with growing displeasure at the dogs' reluctance to really work the rooms they were put in. He didn't even bother putting them in the room that had a floor completely covered with empty water bottles of all shapes and sizes. Any good dog, when put in there to hunt down a hidden drug source, would not care at all that there were hundreds of loud crinkly slippery bottles covering the floor. That was one of Bill's special tricks to weed out the best dogs from the average ones. After the last Dutch dog failed the tests, Bill told the man "I can't take any of these dogs you brought. And the two you came with last time are also not good enough; I'm giving those ones back to you, too." Which meant that poor guy from the Netherlands had to bring 5 dogs back with him. I don't know what it costs to fly a dog across the Atlantic but I'm sure it was well over $500 dollars each way. Bill was unapologetic. "I only have the best dogs here, and nothing less" he told me.







At the end of the first day, I took official custody of Kilo and brought him back to the hotel room with me. It was a first for him and I had to watch him closely since he had a habit of peeing on anything and everything that needed marking, to include hotel beds. He only got mine twice.

I should mention that Kilo's original German name was "Roni." Which I thought was kind of stupid. I knew if I brought him back as "Roni" my coworkers would sooner or later start calling us "Mac and Roni" or "Noodle Roni" or "Rice and Roni" and I didn't want any part of that. Time for new name. Something that sounded more badass and impressive than "Roni."

I had remembered a case I had worked about a year earlier, when I arrested a young man and his girlfriend and took them both to jail. And impounded their car that they had been living in. And I called Animal Control to come get their pitbull puppy, since they couldn't bring it with them to jail. "You're taking our dog away?" the young lady had cried at the time. "Oh, no, not poor little Kilo!" And I was all like "What?! You named your dog Kilo?!" Of course they did, they were drug addicts and thought it was

a cute name for a dog. It didn't take too long for me to realize though that "Kilo" would also be a great name for a police dog. Specifically, a drug-sniffing police dog! So I asked the instructors there if I could rename Roni to Kilo and they said sure, and it didn't take long at all for Kilo to adjust to his new name.

When I brought Kilo back to Poulsbo with me, the Chief for some reason was not thrilled with me changing his name. And then the Mayor weighed in, and suggested we name the dog "Friday" as an homage to Detective Joe Friday, a fictional TV character from the tv police series Dragnet. That was first aired as a radio program in, uh, 1949. A little bit before my time. I said no way. The local newspaper found out about this and they suggested a reader's poll to vote. Which irritated me, so I went online to every different computer I could find for the next week and voted for "Kilo" several dozen times to stack the deck. I was never too worried about it though- I was the K9 handler and that gave me enough say to keep the name as Kilo.

Speaking of dog names…Over the next few years I met a lot of other K9 handlers from different agencies, and of course a lot of dogs. Most were Labrador Retrievers, there were a few small Staffordshire terriers, some Springer Spaniels, some German Shepherds, and the occasional mixed-breed that could or could not be readily identifiable. Their names ranged from awesome to silly. Like "Ruger" or "Bullet" or "Radar" or "Max" or "Scout" to "Stormy" and the very regrettable "Juicy." I also heard about a patrol dog that was on duty in a big city running down the street one day chasing a bad guy and the patrol officer was yelling the dog's name out loud, which was something kind of weird I can't remember but they happened to be running in a part of town that was predominantly filled with European folks – I think maybe Polish? – and the dog's name sounded almost exactly like "WHORE" in their language, and so the police chief got some phone calls the next morning about one of his officers yelling "WHORE!" in that neighborhood and he said the dog's name should be changed.



While I was at the training center, Bill had an advertising company show up there and film some promotional interviews for his YouTube channel. The guys from Samoa, having beat me in distance, got interviewed instead of me. Also featured were some of the local K9 cops from Brevard, Broward, and Volusia counties.

Now having had some recent experience watching lots of other K9 teams training, I had started to develop an appreciation for the fact that dog training, while science based, is still very much an art form. To illustrate the point, I was once at a multi-state training in Idaho. At the start of the conference, the local sheriff started the event off with an introduction and welcome, and he said with a slight chuckle to all the K9 handlers present that although he had never been a handler, he had been a lieutenant in charge of a K9 program, and the one thing he learned was "If you ask three K9 handlers to agree on just one thing, the only answer you'll get is that two of them will agree that the other one is doing it wrong." The point was further emphasized that afternoon when some of the professional expert guest speakers gave out conflicting advice about dog handling techniques during their presentations, even. And during my trainings with other experts, I heard all kinds of different advice. In fact, the conflicting advice started literally on day 1 in Florida, when I realized two of the instructors had different beliefs and ideas about how exactly to train and handle the dogs.

And when I went to other trainings, the different opinions always came up. It was like this: "You're not training your dog enough" "You're training him too much" "You're not playing with him enough" "You're playing with him too much" "Treat him like a pet" "He's not a pet, he's a tool" "Feed him in the morning only" "Feed him only in the evening" "Never give him treats" "Lots of treats are fine" "Make him heel" "Don't make him heel" "Don't let him play with any toys" "Let him play with lots of toys" "Let him play with other dogs" "Never let him play with other dogs" ..and so on. I concluded that if you had ten dog trainers, or breeders, or handlers or canine instructors or any kind of dog professionals in a room and if you asked them one basic question from how to train or what to feed or whatever, yeah…you would probably get 3 or 4 different answers. And at least two would be completely contradictory.





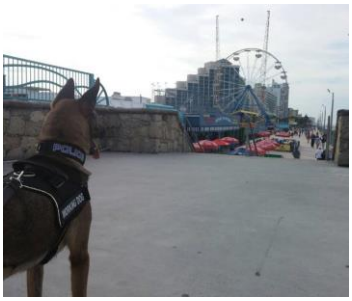
A lot of the confusion is because different dog breeds do things differently and generally speaking, one cannot classify "a dog" as having typical behaviors, reactions, and thought processes as any other random dog. And within each breed, of course each individual dog has its own personality and way of doing things. What motivates one dog may not work for other dogs, even its own littermates that had the exact same upbringing and training. So while one trainer may say "always" and another says "never", it doesn't mean they are wrong; ultimately it depends on the handler trying out different things and having the options to figure out which methods and technique work best for the combination that is the "K-9 Unit" (or "Team") – that being of course the handler and the dog working together.



At the Florida training center, half of the dogs there were drug dogs, the other half were attack dogs. Otherwise known as "general patrol" dogs or more commonly; "tracking dogs." Here is one of the trainers in a bite suit, preparing to have two dogs loosed on him. I also saw him with three dogs hanging off him, and once with four, which is a pretty intense thing to deal with. Every time he took off his bite suit he was sweating profusely due to the Florida heat, humidity, and exertion.

Florida was interesting. The humidity was absolutely brutal; if you did anything to work up a sweat, even after you stopped moving you'd stay sweaty for a very long time afterward. I kept asking the trainers there "How can you stand this?" and most of them would say "I hate this!" which would prompt me to point out that they could, you know, move to another state?

Every day we worked with our new dogs. The dogs were learning how to sniff out drug odors, and the handlers were learning how to keep the dogs focused, and how interpret their dogs' actions and reactions to everything.



On our first weekend, I took Kilo to nearby Daytona Beach. I had never been there either so it was an experience for both of us. There was a large boardwalk there on the beach, complete with big amusement rides, throngs and masses of people, and live music. Kilo's first glimpse of it all caught him by surprise and he literally froze; staring in wonderment at all the action in front of us. That was my first introduction to see how people reacted to him in public; he was a very handsome dog and lots of people wanted to pet him. I wasn't in uniform and we weren't on duty, so I let him get patted and hugged. I also learned to hang on to the leash very tight when he caught a sight of people playing beach volleyball; he really wanted to bolt and go participate in his own way.



I also had a revelation when we walked a couple blocks away from the touristy area and discovered just off the strip of tourist traps and glitz, the town degraded into run down bars and litter everywhere. We came across a group of suspicious looking street people hanging out at a bus stop. They looked like bad news. I felt like crossing to the other side. And then I realized that they were not looking at me so much as they were looking at the dog at the end of my leash. And then I realized that I had nothing to fear because Kilo was kind of a bad ass looking dog! THEY were the ones were should be nervous, and the closer I got, I saw they were a bit apprehensive as we walked by. Because they of course had no idea that he was just a drug-sniffing dog; for all they knew he could have been a personal protection dog. I felt pretty good about that.



Now in case you're wondering how exactly to train a dog to alert to drug odors, I'll explain it here for you: You start with a dog that has some manners and potential and above all, drive. It's not enough that the dog has a "good nose" and can "sniff anything out"; it has to have enough self motivation to stay focused until the job is finished. Some breeds are better than others but ultimately it comes down to each individual dog, which is why a lot of shelter/rescue dogs work just as well as the purebreds; it's just a matter of finding the ones with the most focused energy.

The dog has to want to go to work. Which for a dog, is actually play; it's not work at all. The trainings are always high energy great fun for the dog, and the trainers and handlers are encouraged – nay, mandated – to use high pitched "girly" voices that would otherwise be completely emasculating. That aspect is one of the hardest things for some new K9 handlers to master- especially the big really manly guys who don't want to sound silly when they are encouraging their dogs. But they get over it.

So step one: get a dog that really, really wants to play and has intense focus. You need a dog that is not going to get bored or distracted or tired. You need an energetic dog that has the ability to lock onto a target or a goal and keep fixated on it, to work for the reward that is coming. The reward could be a ball to chase, or a rolled up towel to pounce on, or a rope to chew.



Then you introduce the dog to a room where there is an odor present that you want the dog learn to sniff out. The trainer may have to encourage the dog to sniff around until it gets to the source of the odor. When the dog sniffs that odor up close for the first time, then the trainer throws a toy in front of the dog- whatever the dog's favorite toy is. Most cops had small rolled up towels that were rubber banded into a roll that the dogs loved to play tug with. Kilo's reward was a black Kong chew toy on a rope; he loved that thing much more than a towel, or a ball.

The trainers will always start by determining what the best exact play toy is going to be for each specific dog. And when they find out what it is, then that certain reward toy is going to come out only as a reward for finding that new special odor source; the rest of the time the reward is kept away from the dog. So it's a pretty exciting time when the handler gets that toy out; the dog will instantly realize that work time (well…play time..) is at hand.

The sniff and reward sequence is repeated until the dog learns to associate the particular odor with the reward, which is called operant conditioning. Some dogs need to do this a dozen times, some figure it out after two or three times. If it takes more than a day or two, then the dog is disqualified.



The next step is to progress to a seek and sniff = reward stage, where the dog is not shown the source of the odor every time but has to find it by itself with the trainer nearby watching. Critical is the dog getting rewarded immediately when the odor is located. Some smart dogs will figure this part out pretty quickly; literally only 2 or 3 times will be enough for most.

After the dog is able to learn that skill, then the next step is introduced, which is not rewarding the dog until he sits down, as an "alert" signal. This part requires the trainer to usually force the dog into a sitting mode about a dozen times or so, but if the dog is smart (which it is, of course) it will figure out the sitting/alerting part is required to get the reward of play time. As soon as the reward/play time commences, the dog can run around and be as much of a spaz it wants.

Now some dogs have too much energy to sit down, which is actually okay, as long as they can develop and exhibit consistent alerts signals that are recognizable by the trainer and eventually the hander. Sitting is called "passive alert" and scratching like hell with both paws at the odor source is called an "active alert." Generally speaking the passive alerts are better since there is no potentially destructive clawing involved. Explosive detection dogs of course HAVE to sit quietly, it simply would not do to have a bomb dog excitedly scratch and dig into the odor source..

I'm simplifying the whole process but that's pretty much about it. The basics can be introduced and reinforced in a just a few days and after a lot of practicing the dog can totally be taught to sniff out just about anything. While I was there in Florida, they were also training some dogs to sniff out a certain kind of fungus that when it got out of control in orange groves, could kill a lot of orange trees. Dogs can be trained to sniff out any specific odor you could imagine; a short list would include: bed bugs, human remains, cancer, endangered animal species, explosives, fire accelerates, cell phones, CDROMS, USB drives, mold, termites, produces, gourmet fungi, and wildlife scat. And whale poop. Like I said, if something has an odor, a dog can be trained to sniff it out.



Detection dogs require a command word usually to commence the searching. It could be anything but there are a few standard ones that are common. Kilo's commands were all in German, since he was from Germany. But his "go find the drugs" command was the common Dutch "sook!" which means "go search!" and it worked fine. But it didn't take Kilo long at all to realize though that when I got the Kong on the rope out, he knew right away it was "sook" time. He'd get all worked up and all I'd have to do is silently just point in a general direction and he'd know to get to work there.

A K9 handler and his or her dog is commonly referred to as a "K9 Unit" – both are required and necessary to get the job done. It might look like the dog is doing most of the work, but the handler does more than just transport and deploy the dog. The handler needs to figure out where to best start the searching, and which direction to go. Outside, which was is the wind blowing? Are there air currents that are going to help or hinder? During the search, the handler needs to pay close attention to the dog to pick up on any visual clues that the dog might be finding the odor it is trained to detect. The handler needs to be sure the dog does not miss any areas – which sounds easy to do but requires a bit of sustained concentration.

Kilo was taught to sniff for illegal drugs; heroin, cocaine, and methamphetamine. Now of course he could never tell me what exactly he was smelling; when he alerted I knew he found something, but I of course didn't know which odor it was exactly until I got my hands on the actual substance. Cocaine, meth, and heroin can be smelled by humans, but dogs are much, much better at it. Heroin is the stinkiest; it has a distinctive vinegar smell. (next time you have a big roll of packing/shipping tape – the clear kind – quickly peel off a couple feet of it and then smell it. Black tar heroin smells almost exactly like that.)

For the second week of our training, Susan flew out to stay with us. I took her to the training center and introduced her to everybody as my police "Captain" which impressed them all considerably but then she had to ruin it by admitting she was not a hot looking cop who outranked me, she was just my wife.





Susan fell in love with Kilo right away. After each day of training we'd take him out; one time was a dog park, another time was a lake with signs that warned of alligators, another dog park, and another time Kilo met some swans face to face at a park that had a huge pond/lake and I discovered that Kilo had absolutely no interest in them. You'd think those long necks would be just irresistible to a dog, but nope. No interest. And one time, we left Kilo in the hotel room for a bit while we went on an airboat ride through swamplands near the Everglades, since that seemed like a thing to do while were there. And we discovered that being 50 miles North of the Kennedy Space Center was close enough to see a rocket blasting off up into the sky, carrying some kind of satellite. We also both decided pretty quickly that although Florida was nice and warm, the humidity was absolutely insane and there was no way we would ever want to live there.

I finished the end of the two week course with a big test; the instructors hid some drugs and Kilo and I went and sniffed them out. The same like we'd been training on, but this time it was scored and nobody helped us. It was stressful as hell for me but we passed the test and we got an official certification issued by the United States Police Canine Association.

The three of us then packed up and we flew back to Seattle. Unfortunately Kilo was in a crate in part of the cargo hold because despite what a lot of people (even professional handlers) think, working dogs are not the same as service dogs and they don't qualify to ride in airplane cabins automatically. Although if I had to do it again though, I would have at tried to get Kilo to ride in the main cabin at our feet. He probably could have; he was such an official looking dog.

So Kilo came home with us and we introduced him our labs Jewell and Topaz. They were initially a little freaked at his high energy level but after a couple days they warmed up to him, and I'm pleased to report they never had any fights.





Kilo adjusted well, although he felt inspired to jump the backyard fence several times, which gave me several heart attacks when I could not find him in the backyard. The solution was to get a couple hundred dollars' worth of green vinyl coated mesh fencing, cut it in half lengthwise, and create an 18" edge/lip that hung out horizontally over the top of the fence on the inside, which was only about 5 and half feet tall. The overhang trick worked perfectly; that put a complete end to the fence jumping. Also HOA compliant.



Back at work, one of my first goals was to get a Washington State K9 Certification, issued by the Washington State Criminal Justice Training Commission, which was then in charge of overseeing that all police dogs met the Washington Administrative Code requirements to be properly trained and certified as real police dogs. First though, I had to get 200 hours of training time logged, so Kilo and I went in practice practice practice mode, which for him looked a lot like hide and seek and play time. I hid drugs all over the place in the police department and upstairs in City Hall. Sometimes other people were present, sometimes it was just us. It didn't matter at all to Kilo if there was an audience; he'd go to work and sniff out the drugs and was not distracted when he was in search mode.

I also tested him in unusual places; city parks, our public works facilities where the garbage trucks were parked, in the schools, and random office buildings. My goal was to test him with other "distracting odors" present, to prevent any future criminal defense attorneys from questioning his reliability. I documented every hide and seek session, noting everything: the time of day, the weather, the temperature, the wind conditions, how much drugs were hidden where, and if there were other significant odors present. One of the main goals was to prove Kilo could find drugs and not get distracted by anything else. A good case could get challenged in court if a defense attorney could convince a jury that the police dog might have in fact alerted to a dead fish in the stinky garbage right next to where drugs were, meaning the alert was bad, and then all probable cause established by the alert was unfounded and not admissible. So I made sure I'd be able to testify under oath if necessary that Kilo could in fact easily sniff out illegal drugs hidden in the middle of a farm feed store, full of hay and straw and baby chicks in cages and pallets of animal feed and pallets of farm fertilizers and even rats running around and when he alerted to an odor, I'd know for sure it was drugs and not anything else. Heroin hiding in an auto parts store? Full of all kinds of oils and fluids and chemicals? No problem. I documented all of our trainings I made a good paper record of hundreds of training sessions, showing that Kilo was able to sniff out drugs no matter where they were hidden, and he didn't falsely alert to any other weird smells present. Now because Kilo was trained to ignore marijuana smells, he as a matter of routine did not alert to marijuana. Unfortunately, because a lot of drug users did not limit themselves to just meth or heroin, but also used marijuana too, it was inevitable that Kilo would start to associate marijuana odors with heroin and cocaine and meth; meaning he'd sometimes alert when the predominate smell (to me anyway) was marijuana. Most likely he was also smelling some heroin or meth mixed in, but to be sure I occasionally had to hide some pure marijuana that had no trace of any other drug on or in it. Then run Kilo by it, and the second he started to show any interest I'd yell at him to ignore it and I'd keep him moving to some meth or heroin I'd have also stashed at the other end of the room. Then one day in a burst of inspiration I went to the nearest cannabis store, which at that point had been open for only about a year. It was a native American tribal store on the Suquamish reservation. I explained what I wanted to do, and the managers there loved my idea. So I hid some heroin in the middle of their store, and brought Kilo in to find it. To my great relief he quickly found it and alerted to it, completely ignoring the smell of a couple dozen different strains of dried marijuana and edible products everywhere. The employees there were thrilled that the drug dog had ignored their products, and when I asked the manager how much inventory they had there he said "I got about a quarter million dollars' worth of marijuana here." That training session was so notable I put it in Kilo's official resume, called an affidavit. That's the document used in court to establish training and experience and to support probable cause for arrests and seizures. I don't know how many times criminal defense attorneys got access to all of Kilo's training records, but I'm pretty certain when they studied them and saw he could sniff out heroin literally in the middle of a marijuana store, ignoring everything marijuana-related in there, well, that's a drug dog that can't really be easily argued against in court.

So Kilo and I became a K9 Unit. He did most of the work but I had to do my share too. My job was to deploy him in the right area and watch him closely for what is called "changes of behavior" which he'd exhibit when he caught a whiff of a hidden drug odor he was trying to zoom in on. The changes of behavior were important to note because unfortunately all smart dogs would occasionally try to cheat to get their reward. All detection dogs at some point or another will try to skip some steps and instead of finishing the job of sniffing out the drugs, they'll just go straight to the "alert" phase and look to the handler expectantly to throw out the reward toy. So it was the job of the handler to be able to recognize those bullshit attempts, call the dog out, and tell the dog to actually get to work and keep sniffing to actually find the odor source, not just alert to a random whiff on the breeze. Now virtually any and all good alerts are preceded by changes of behavior that the dog can't hide – a tail snapping

upright quickly is a good indicator the dog was suddenly caught a whiff of drugs nearby. Closed mouth sniffing is also an indicator he's on to something. Individual dogs have their own unique indicators, and their handler being able to recognize those is what makes the dog and the handler a good K9 Unit.

I trained with a lot of other K9 handlers from other departments, and I got hooked up with some Border Patrol agents and their dogs who worked out of the Port Angeles office. Their main job there was to work the ferries that went back and forth to Canada and keep the drug trafficking to a minimum. The agent in charge there was one of the state certifying officials, so not only did he train Kilo and I some more and help us practice, he was the guy who tested us several months later when we had logged the required 200 training hours.







The state's certification test was interesting: it involved searching rooms, then luggage, and then cars. Over the years the standards and protocols had been established and revised to make it fair and incontestable in court. For example, in the old days the instructors would tell the handlers "We've hidden ten baggies of drugs in these hotel rooms," and they'd point out which rooms where involved, usually like 6, 7, 8, 9, or 10 rooms. (The instructors would find cooperative hotels who would let them use some vacant rooms before housekeeping got to them) And then the handlers would go in and have their dogs find the drugs. But some rooms would have no drugs in them, and some rooms might have two or three stashed in them. So occasionally, more than few handlers would search, say, 9 rooms, find 9 drug stashes, and then rightfully conclude that the 10th room would have the 10th stash. But in fact, that last room would sometimes be empty, and that 10th stash was in fact back in room number 7 hidden under the couch, in addition to the stash hidden behind the TV. This kind of a scenario would then commonly result in the handlers, in frustration and sometimes near panic, becoming convinced that there must that missing stash was in the last room and so then they'd work their dogs so much in there that the dogs would then pick up on the anxiety and get tired and then they'd finally just alert on any slightest smelly thing in the room in an attempt to appease their handler, but of course there were no actual drugs there, and so they'd fail that test for missing a stash, and for making a "false alert." Over the years a solution was finally reached, and the new standard was the instructors would advise the handlers "You got 7 rooms to search. Some may be empty, some may have two or three hides, and we're not gonna tell you what the total number of hidden drug stashes is." That system turned out to work much better. The instructors would make it as random as possible, even rolling dice to come up with numbers about how many hides, and which rooms got how many, and even which room to start in first. So the randomness of it meant that sometimes there would be several rooms in a row that were "clean" – which I can personally attest is very disconcerting to clear 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 rooms in a row without finding anything, because self-doubt really starts coming in after the 3rd room when the dog has found nothing at all.

The luggage search test is a standard; dogs that work at airports of course search luggage all day long so that one is pretty basic: A dozen pieces of different kinds of luggage are lined up, and one or more have drugs hidden in them. Kilo usually aced that part of the test.

The last part is searching cars. Typically done in a junkyard or a public works parking lot where there were lots of cars lined up. Two sets of cars would be picked out in two different parts of the lot. Some drugs would be hidden in some parts of some of the cars by some instructors, who would then leave. Another instructor would later check in the K9 unit that was being tested. That instructor would not know what has been hidden, nor has he even seen the cars, and he will not be present for the searching. All he would do is flip a coin and then point the K9 team to one part of the lot or the other. Because the instructors had learned that when they were physically present to grade the exercise, the dogs and or handlers would either subconsciously or knowingly be able to intuit where some of the hides were. I was able to start figuring that out all by myself during all the practicing and training I did, pretty early on even. For example, the instructors or experienced handlers would hide some drugs in a big room, and then when they let in the K9 in there that was training, they'd position themselves in a place where they could easily observe the dog's changes of behavior and final alert. So for example, when I was practicing in say, an old school, and we'd go into room after room, if the instructors stayed out in the hallway on the third room, then that was a pretty clear indication to me that the third room was going to be empty "blank" with nothing hidden in it. But when an instructor followed us into a room and stationed themselves in a certain part of the room, then I'd get a clue that something was hidden in a general area. And, based on where the instructors were looking, I'd get another clue about the general area. So then of course I'd start to really watch to

see when Kilo would start to pick up the scent and change his behavior to indicate he was homing in on the odor source. So the state certifying officials picked up on those principals years ago, they developed stringent car testing protocols developed into a "double-blind" test where no instructors at all would be present for the car searching; it was just the handler and the dog. That way there was no chance that the dog or handler would get any kind of clues about what or where to focus their searching. So when the dogs alerted to certain cars, we'd note which cars and which parts of the cars, and then submit paperwork to the scoring officials later; the ones who knew where the drugs had been hidden. That test was actually the easiest; the fact that there was nobody else watching with a critical or curious eye actually relieved a lot of pressure.

When I started studying for our first state certification test, I was a little alarmed to see that the requirements included some basic obedience commands and skills that Kilo didn't have; like being able to walk next to me in a very controlled manner, and being able to sit and lay down and things like that. When I mentioned this to the state official he relaxed me right away. "Those rules were written for patrol dogs, not drug dogs!" He explained. "Patrol dogs, hell yeah you need those under complete control. You need to be able to call them off anybody at any time, even if they are starting or in complete attack mode." That makes sense, I agreed. "But drug dogs are different," he continued. "If a drug dog is pulling pulling pulling hard on a leash to get into an area to be searched, that's not a problem! He's not going to go attack anybody, he's going to find the drugs so he can play! I don't want to see a drug dog handler holding that dog back!" I was then assured that the obedience requirements part of the testing process was not required anymore. The Border Patrol agent/state official told me "My philosophy is…if the dog can enter the area to be searched and not bite anybody, find the drugs, and leave without biting anybody, then the dog passes, no matter how big a spaz he may be."

The point was further emphasized when another handler, during a test, restrained his dog too much while looking for hidden drugs. The instructors told him afterward "Well you did great, almost. You found all of the hidden drugs, but you don't get a perfect score because we hid an extra one just outside the search area, which your dog totally could smell and was trying to drag you over to it repeatedly, but you kept pulling him away!"

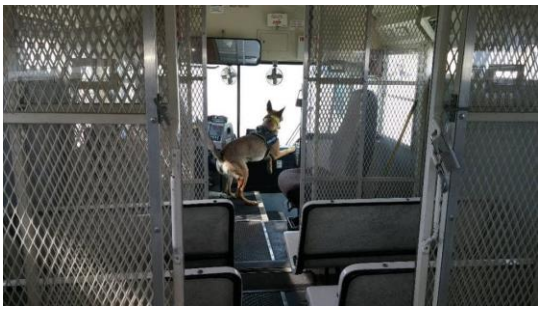


After Kilo and I got our 200 hours of training time in, we qualified to take the certification test. It was stressful for me, but we passed and I was super happy. A year later we did it again. Also stressful, but very happy afterward. Not every K9 unit passed it on the first try; sometimes for whatever reason some dogs would miss some drugs, usually because the handlers neglected to notice that the dogs had missed some part of a room or a car. That the was main purpose of the handler, really; to ensure their dogs got every corner and every area of the place or thing to be searched. Sometimes the drug odors would get airborne and spread out and be easy for the dogs to zoom in on; but sometimes the drug odors would be very minimal and not spread out, or even worse there would be an air current that was carrying away the drug odor so effectively that the dog could be within a foot of the source and not smell it because the odor was literally not present in the air where the dog's nose is. Again, that's why the human handler is there; to make sure the dog gets into every place it should to find the drugs.

After we got certified as an official state-approved K9 team, I continued to train with other K9 units. The best training was in Seattle with K9 units from larger agencies. They had access to all kinds of interesting places, and once a month they'd host a training where anywhere from 6 to 12 other teams would show up. Drugs would be hidden, and we'd take turns finding them.

One time the training location was at a Seattle public works yard; where there were dozens of trucks, bulldozers and cars and sheds of all kinds. One of the instructors hid some drugs in the bucket part of a boom truck; literally about 12 feet off the ground. Most of the dogs were able to catch the scent in the wind; it was the job of the handlers to note their dogs' changes of behavior and help guide them into the area closest to the source, which in that case was about 25 feet downwind of the truck's bucket. That was up in the air. That one was categorized as Extra Difficult. There was also a prison bus there that we searched, notable because it was a prison bus. Because how often does one get to play in a prison bus?





In this photo, one of the sneaky instructors hid some drugs up near the ceiling in an old school, with the intention of making sure the dogs got as close as possible to the source before giving their final alert; in this case, from the top of a desk instead of the floor was the desired place for the dog to wind up.



And another site - my favorite – was a vacant super giant old Masonic retirement home built in 1926; it had had well over a hundred rooms that included living units, common areas, theatres and chapels, a boiler room, woodshop, hallways, stairwells, and the place was just HUGE; 7 floors high. Probably haunted too; I don't know that I would have liked to be there at night. The training instructors hid drugs all over that place for the k9 handlers to play hide and seek with.





Other training sites included empty houses, car lots, and decommissioned publics schools, which were pretty much exactly like what you might imagine they'd look like: dark hallways, lots of dusty classrooms, (some stuffed full of chairs and desks) and giant old gymnasiums, cafeterias, and boiler rooms. Another training site was a summer camp church resort, with an old lodge and lots of little cabins on a lakefront.







The trainings usually included officers from Seattle PD, and King County sheriff's deputies. Cops from other cities around there also participated; Fife PD, Auburn PD, Puyallup PD, Edmonds PD, Federal Way PD, and others, to name a few.



Kilo and I also trained at the US Coast Guard station near downtown Seattle. There were some cutters there, and a couple of huge old icebreakers; one was decommissioned and kind of empty, but it was being kept in a reserve status so parts could be salvaged from it for the other still-active icebreaker there.



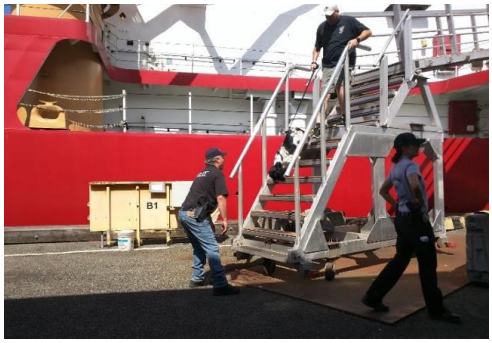




We had special access to the decommissioned icebreaker. The instructors hid drugs all over it and it was big enough that several K9 units could work in there at once, rotating between the engine room, the pilot house, the captain's stateroom, some random utility and mechanical compartments, and hallways. It was daunting, given the size of the ship, but fun.







To get on the ship there was a pretty steep set of stairs, and then once onboard there a lot of steep ladder stairs. It was good training for the dogs; some were apprehensive at first but eventually they all got used to them and were able to go up and down pretty quickly. Unlike one of the Coast Guard dogs, that had significant issues with the stairs. That dog wound up getting fired, cause, well, USCG dogs need to be able to navigate up and down ship stairs like that.

With the Border Patrol, Kilo and also trained at the USCG Air Station in Port Angeles, which was picturesque with Canada to the North across the Strait of Juan De Fuca, and to the South, the nearby Olympic Mountains.







There were indoor offices and barracks, and also some small patrol boats to sniff around in, for variety's sake. Sometimes the instructor there (a Border Patrol Agent) would hide cat food kibble in the areas to be searched, in an effort to confuse the working dogs. Fortunately, Kilo ignored (most of the time) the "distracting odors" present; both incidentally and intentionally placed.

Here was a training one day at a horse arena in the Seattle area. The first couple times I walked into an area this big I was almost completely overwhelmed, like most handlers. The trick, or the method, is to basically just make sure the dog covers most of the general area and if there is a scent in the air to be picked up, the dog should be able catch a whiff in the air and work it back to the source.





The instructors hid drugs there in places like the he middle of a pallet of horse feed bags, and in the top of a stack of straw bales. It looks difficult as hell but as we all found out, if the handlers make sure the dogs walk somewhere or anywhere near the odor source, the dogs should be able to catch a whiff in the air and then be able to work their way toward the hidden stash within a few minutes. We also trained once a horse auction arena, and a couple times at some random auto wrecking yards. It was all excellent training and it was invaluable to our development as a K9 team.

When I got Kilo, one of the first things I did was put him in a harness thing to wear, because I thought it looked super cool and professional. I tried a variety of different patches on the side, and I was quite pleased with his overall appearance of looking professional and badass. I also got him a big collar that I could put a professional patch on, too. So while I may have dressed the dog up goofy sometimes, his default look on patrol was this:







Interestingly enough, I saw only a few other dogs wearing this much. The vast majority had only a collar, and even then most of the collars were very plain and simple and well, boring. It was very important to me to have a professional looking dog. Mission Totally Accomplished.

Now at that time, my assigned vehicle was a 2010 Chevy Tahoe. The department had purchased a stupid expensive metal kennel/crate that was bolted in the very back for the dog to ride in. I absolutely hated it; I didn't want the dog in the very back where I couldn't see him and it was difficult to get him to jump up into the thing in the very back. The preferred option for most police dogs – well, actually all – is to install what they call a K9 insert into the back seat; a giant multi-piece aluminum thing that has room for dog to lay down. Of course the factory/stock seat in the back has to come out. I really wanted one of those but they cost well over $2,000 dollars and we had no budget for it. Which is why they made me stuff the dog in the very back. Then one day I got some inspiration; I could make my own K9 insert! There was already a heavy duty partition between the front and back seat, and there was another partition between the back seat and the rear cargo area –to keep prisoners out of there, you know. I presented my idea and I was given permission to proceed. The back seat was a 1/3 – 2/3 split. I kept the 1/3 size on the right side and unbolted the 2/3 seat from the left and middle. I measured, cut, painted and fitted a vertical sheet of plywood between the front and rear partitions to act as a wall; the top half was thick metal mesh. Then I added a horizontal sheet above the floor to create a new solid flat floor. Some paint and bolts and screws and then some carpeting and it was done. And the whole thing cost less than $120 bucks! There was plenty of room then for Kilo and he loved it too.







I put a big padded dog bed in the back so Kilo wouldn't slide around during any crazy driving, which happened a lot. In fact, I had never realized how drastic my driving was until Kilo showed up. Hearing him slide around in the back and crash into the walls made me very aware of how my driving affected him, and from then on I had to make a concerted effort from to calm down my sudden U-turns in traffic to go catch traffic violators, and I had to be aware of speed bumps and things like that. Yet another example of how being a K9 handler means you have to be aware of what the dog is experiencing.

I kept that partition open, so he could sit in the back and stare out the front window and see what was going on. And drip slobber all over my thermal paper printer housing directly underneath his mouth. You can see I added a couple water bottle holders and I bolted a small water bowl into the side. So this view is from where the prisoners would sit when I was taking them to jail. I always sternly instructed my prisoners "to not interact with the K9" because I didn't want them acting all nice-nice and making friends with the dog. Because they didn't deserve have any kind of a friendly relationship with the police dog. That's just another consequence of being a law breaker; law breakers don't get to be buddies with the police dog.

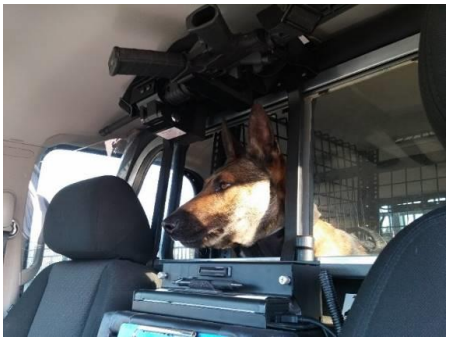






These accommodations were quite above and beyond the norm; I observed most handlers had just plain bare metal flooring for their dogs, or maybe a rubber mat to give the dogs a little traction to not slide around so much during fast driving. In fact, mine was the only carpeted + dog bed set up I ever saw.

One of the realities of being a K9 hander is coming to terms with the dog hair that is constant. All K9 vehicles have varying levels of dog hair in them, and I mean everywhere: in the back, in the front, under the seats, on the seats, and between the seats. My solution was to go park the rig out in the middle of nowhere, let the dog out, and blow the whole thing out with a cordless electric leaf blower. Much faster than using a vacuum to suck it all up: I just opened all the doors and blew it all out. It worked great. I had to do that every week.







Dog was my copilot!





And I learned that I had to calm down my normal style of driving. I had not realized how sharp I routinely took corners and did U-turns in traffic until I heard Kilo sliding around in the back and thumping into the seat and doors and partition walls. So for his sake I smoothed out my cornering.

I also noticed that Kilo learned what certain turns and hills and speed bumps meant to him; when we were getting close to the police station or home, or some of the fields where I'd run him, I'd see him get up and stick his head out the window, he knew when we were getting close to a destination he was familiar with based just on what combination of turns or road conditions he was recognizing.



In the very back I had my usual gear and equipment, and a box for Kilo's leashes and toys. Also visible here on the right side there is a black lock box that was bolted onto the floor securely; that was where I kept my stash of official training drugs. I had small quantities of heroin, some cocaine, some crack cocaine, and some meth crystals. I was the only one with a key for that thing and I was required to not lose any of it, ever. The drugs came from local criminals that had been caught with them. To be sure about the purity, we had the drugs sent off the state crime lab and they confirmed they were indeed the drugs we thought they were. I had about 20 grams of crystal meth, which I divided into several smaller heat sealed baggies, so I could train Kilo with 1 gram of meth, or 10 grams, or 15.. All of the different drugs were heat sealed in clear plastic, and I carried them separately in airtight containers in the lock box so there would be no cross contamination with each other.



Kilo's reward toy was a black Kong on a rope. When he earned the Kong and it was thrown, he'd fetch it and bring it back, ready to tug on it. He loved to just tug on it. That was his thing. He could do that for a very, very long time. It didn't take long for his aggressive tugging and yanking to cause a semi-permanent pain in my right shoulder; the pain didn't go away until after I transferred out of the K9 program. So whenever we were called out to assist other officers, I invariably handed the Kong rope off to the other cops to spare my shoulder, which was something most K9 cops did not do. But I liked sharing in the fun. Most cops were quite surprised that they got to play with the dog, and most of them loved it. But there was one thing about Kilo and the tugging on the Kong...it tended to make his mouth get kind of drooly, Actually, frothy is a better word. And when his mouth got full of froth and he'd shake his head back and forth violently with the Kong in his mouth, invariably there would be strings of slobbery dog froth flying through the air at about waist level, and almost always landing on the officer's uniforms. Needless to say, it was usually quite hilarious to see the reactions of the cops when they looked down and saw huge messes of frothy dog slobby on their dark uniforms. Especially at groin level. I should have taken some pictures, so we can appreciate just what that looked like. Here you can see a couple Bremerton cops getting some play time in after they wanted Kilo to smell some drug money.





Specifically in that case, the officers had just seized several thousand dollar's cash and they wanted to prove it was drug money. I had them set it down in the parking lot and then I put Kilo to work with a command to start sniffing. As always, I started him far away and I directed him to sniff other things first, like random cars, a garbage dumpster, and light poles. When we go the money I ignored it and kept moving, so he would not detect any change of expectant behavior from me. But as always, when he caught an odor of drugs, he zoomed in towards the money pulling me backwards on the leash. After pinpointing the odor source he confidently sat down and stared, knowing his Kong would come sailing in as a reward. The money was then confiscated and a notice of forfeiture was served to the defendant/criminal, notifying them formally that the police were not going to give them their money back. Because reasons.

I enjoyed being the K9 cop. It had a certain high level of cachet to it; there was only one dog handler in the department and that was me. There were in fact only 3 drug dog police units in the entire county at that time; one of the other ones was from Bremerton PD and the other one was a tribal cop. At that time, the county sheriff's office had two dogs but they were both the kind that smelled out bad guys, not drugs. So Kilo and I were in high demand, and not infrequently I'd get called to help out somewhere in the county when the other K9 cops were not on duty.



This meant of course that I was subject to being called out on my time off. More than once it was at some stupid hour like 11 pm or 2 am. I remember the first time that happened; I was sound asleep at night, my phone went off I started swearing and wondering who in the hell was calling me in the middle of the night and then I remembered I was the new K9 handler and I had essentially signed up for that. "Oh yeah, that's right I'm the K9 handler now.."

And unfortunately, my presence was usually needed with an urgent immediacy because of time constraints. Meaning, the dog was needed to sniff a car on a traffic stop, and the dog was needed like NOW, usually because the driver was still in the car and the officer needed the K9 unit there before the stop was over. Because the United States Supreme Court had ruled that a traffic stop could not be extended or delayed to wait for a police dog to show up and sniff it. To do so would violate the drivers' right to be free from unlawful detainment. So. If a traffic stop took, say, 11 minutes for the officer to investigate and write a ticket or two, then at the end of that process the driver had to be released and could not legally be detained any longer to wait for a K9 dog to come sniff the car. In fact, the K9 unit had to do their thing while the original officer was still writing the ticket; as soon as the officer is done with the ticket, the driver is free to go and can't be held a second longer, even if the dog is only halfway done sniffing the car. So time was of the essence and a fast response was critical.



One day I was on patrol when a Bremerton police officer called for a K9 unit to come sniff this suspicious as hell car he had stopped. The BPD K9 unit was not on duty at the time, but I was, so I rushed out to Bremerton to go help. I set a new land speed PR to get there quickly. When I arrived, the BPD officer explained that the stop was taking a little longer than usual because his printer wasn't working, so he had to write out a traffic ticket by hand. Quite coincidentally, this gave me the time needed to drive the 19 miles from where I was to his location. While he finished the ticket, I ran Kilo around the car. What do you know right while we were finishing (with a positive alert indicating an odor of illegal narcotics in the car) the BPD Officer got done writing his ticket. The driver did not want to give consent to search to search his car, so the BPD officer impounded it with a tow truck, later got a search warrant, and found the hidden drugs.

I should mention, and this is as good as a place as any, that Washington State, being run by liberals in the executive, legislative and judicial branches, had some laws on the books that made police work way more difficult than it should have been. One great example is that the Washington courts had decided to protect the rights of drivers to the extreme, and deny the police search powers incident to arrest, or based on just reasonable suspicion or even probable cause. Meaning, when we stopped a car and saw drug paraphernalia in the car, and we knew from prior experiences that the driver was a drug addict, none of that gave us a good enough legal reason to search the car. In fact, even if we saw actual drugs in the car, we could not search without consent or a warrant. That's right we had to get a search warrant first. This was especially painful because in the old days we did have the authority to search; we could (and did, all the time) order the driver out of the car, and we could search the whole thing (except the locked glove box and trunk) and look under the seats, in the center console; everywhere, and recover the drugs. Then the laws changed and to search a car required getting a judge to approve it, via a search warrant, which was several pages of legal forms to fill out appropriately and then present to a judge. Not. Ever. Convenient.

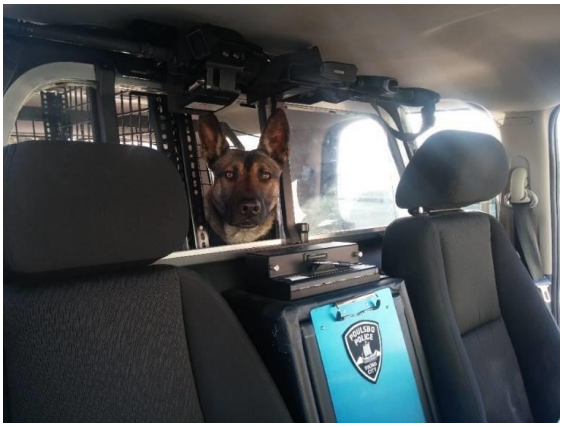
When I went to Florida for my initial K9 training, the other officers there, all being from Southern states, were shocked and horrified to hear me describe how Washington cops needed a search warrant to look in a car. Because in those southern states, no warrant was needed. They could hardly believe what I was telling them, and they felt very sorry for me that I had to jump through so many stupid legal hoops to do police work.

Later as the years went by, more and more restrictive rules were added to police work. For example, it became essentially illegal for a K9 handler to bring his dog up to a front porch of a residence to sniff the front door seams to try and detect any odor of drugs coming from inside the house. Because homeowners have privacy rights, you know. That particular ruling caused a huge nationwide gasp and face palm from every K9 handler, our general thought was that a front porch, if it were accessible by, say, any random delivery man, or girl scouts selling cookies, or door-to-door solicitors, then it must certainly be okay for a police dog, too? But no.



Another sad example: phones became illegal to search. Even if a criminal were running away from a crime scene and they intentionally abandoned their phone and the police find it, we couldn't just open it up and start browsing. A search warrant would be required. Because, you know...even criminals have rights.

Two more stories about being on call and getting called in while off duty. I remember one night, December 23rd. It was dark and kinda rainy/snowy out. A drunk driver had caused a car crash in a major intersection and I think it was the car that he hit had suspected drugs in it. So Kilo and I got called out sniff that car. We were on the scene within a few minutes, and I enjoyed the experience of seeing a bunch of cops and firefighters all stop what they were doing to watch Kilo and I. With the blue and red lights from several police cars and fire trucks flashing and strobing the scene, and a lot of drivers going by also watching, we went to work. Kilo quickly alerted on the car, and to be sure I ran him over it a couple more times from different directions. Every time was an alert at the same drivers side door seam, which was enough to have a tow truck impound the car, and we later applied for a search warrant. Anyway, I just liked that event where I showed up and everybody stepped back and stopped everything to watch us.



Another call out I remember was when a PPD sergeant had stopped a car and found the driver had a fanny pack stuffed full of cash. $7,000 dollars. Sergeant Halsted wanted a drug dog to render an opinion if the cash was drug related, so he called for me. Because it was just a traffic stop, time was tight and I had to get there fast which was a problem, as I explained to him, because it was day off and my patrol vehicle was at the repair shop getting some sort of mechanical problem worked on. "I'll send Dave to come get you!" yelled the sergeant, hanging up. I quickly got threw on my uniform and got Kilo in his harness…grabbed his leash and his reward toy, and a couple minutes later I heard a police car siren off in the distance. Getting closer. Oh my god, I hope that's not for me..I thought. Siren got louder, I look outside and a police car with lights full on came ripping into my driveway. I ran outside with Kilo and officer Dave yelled "Get in!" with a look of mild panic on his face so we jumped in his car. I said "Where are we going?!?" and he looked at me suddenly very confused and said "I thought you knew?" I looked back and said "John is out on a traffic stop somewhere but he didn't say where exactly." Dave looked at me and said "Shit he didn't tell me either, he just said to come get you ASAP because you don't have a car and I thought Kilo was hurt and we needed to go to the vet clinic!" Which explained the lights and sirens response. Laughing I explained it was apparently just a traffic stop we needed to go to, not the vets'. So we went and found Sgt. Halsted, and we both told him that next time he should clarify what's going on and not give people the impression that there is a medical emergency going on. Although that turned out to be a kind of funny event, I realized that the whole "HEY NICK DROP EVERYTHING GET YOUR DOG AND COME OUT HERE IMMEDIATELY!" thing was actually a bit stressful, not just during the event but afterward…knowing that it could happen again at any time. A younger, more excitable officer might really love events like that but at my age, being on call 24/7 was not really on my list of things that I looked forward to.



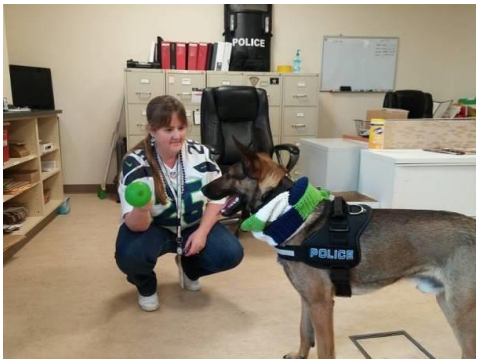
I got a lot of toys for Kilo, including some balls. Kilo had a capability to focus, and I mean really, really focus, on his toys. He liked chasing balls, so any ball being held would become the absolute center of his universe and he would focus on it like a laser for a very long time.







Once I caught onto his fixation with balls, I figured out it was pretty easy to get him to pose almost anywhere. Here is wearing a garland of crime scene tape, as one would. Looking intently at the ball I'm holding behind the cell phone camera lens. As long as I held a ball, he'd just stare at it.







So yeah..in all of these pictures here, he's looking at a ball:







For this one below, I had another officer standing in front of the police car here holding a ball to get this shot. Yes, the dog is not buckled in. That would have been a little too difficult to manage.



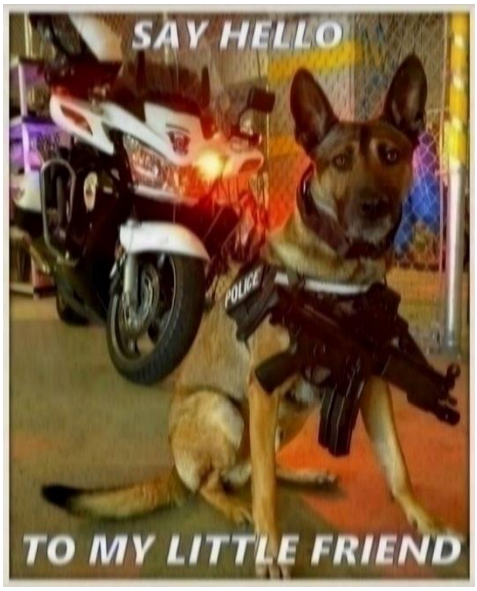


Here is Kilo sitting in the new chief's office. Of course this photo was taken on a weekend when the chief was away and he left his door unlocked. Chief Townsend was a good sport about it though, and he posted the photo on his official twitter page, and Seattle's KOMO news reposted it on their Facebook page where within a couple weeks it got over 4,000 "likes" and a lot of funny comments about what the dog was doing online.









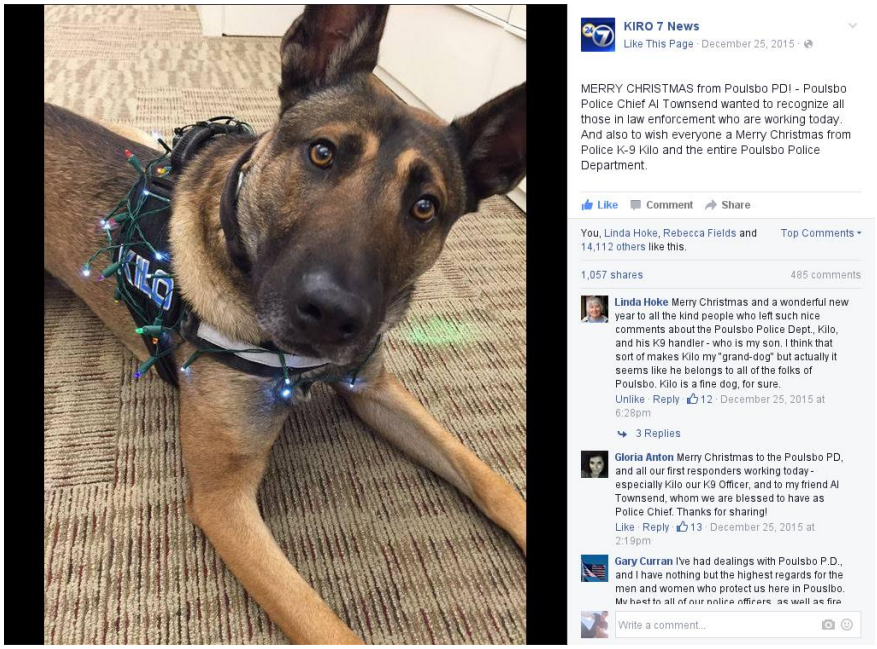
The municipal court judge, Jeff Tolman, was actually quite agreeable to let the dog wear his robe for a photo shoot in the courtroom:



For Christmas one year I put lights on his little saddle, which is what I called his harness.



When I wasn't looking the chief took this pic below and posted it on his official twitter page. It got 485 comments, 1,057 shares, and over 14,000 likes within a week.



For what it's worth, I probably had more fun with my dog than the average K9 handler did, especially in the category of picture taking. Most K9 handlers took only a fraction of photos of their dogs that I did.

For our first Christmas together, I found some real jingle bells – the big silver ones for horses – and I put them on Kilo's working harness. On the Friday before winter break, we went into the high school cafeteria during lunch and even though it was pretty noisy with several hundred kids there eating and talking, everybody heard the loud jingle bells when Kilo trotted in; you can imagine all the heads turning! For the record, jingle bells on a trotting dog sounds pretty cool. We also toured the three floors of City Hall with the jingle bells; a good way for a handsome dog to endear himself even more to all his fans. However a couple of my coworkers were somewhere between aghast and in general disbelief that I put jingle bells on the police dog- they would have never been able to even imagine such a thing themselves and they considered the whole idea completely ridiculous. I had no regerts. And Kilo didn't care, either. The way I saw it, we were winning hearts and minds.

It wasn't all fun and games though – Kilo was a working dog!

Here we are getting ready to participate in a drug raid on a doper's house. Our job was to go in after the place was cleared of bad guys and Kilo would look for hidden stashes of drugs.





And here we are at the Bremerton Police Department, to sniff some seized currency and establish a drug-related nexus so the cash could be seized and forfeited from some drug dealer.

Seizing drugs from criminals is pretty cool, but even better is seizing cash. Now while it's not illegal for criminals to carry around huge amounts of cash, it is of course quite illegal to profit from drug dealing so if all the evidence points to drug dealing activity with cash as the main motive, then the money can be confiscated and a judge will decide if the police can keep it or not. Invariably, we got to keep it. Here's Kilo with some of his finds, and yep these are hundred dollar bills:





Specifically, to establish a connection between stacks of cash and drug dealing, one of the main elements needed was the fact that the money literally smelled like drugs. This was easily accomplished by handling the money with new disposable gloves and setting it down somewhere far away from where the drugs were. I'd typically put the cash in a new small brown paper bag, and also set up several other small brown paper bags that were empty. Set Kilo loose in the room, watch him run around in seek mode, watch him sniff them all and then alert to the one bag with the cash in it. Easy.







Now some of you might be saying wait a minute, isn't it very likely though that Kilo was alerting to the smell of the US currency itself? You know like he's come to associate the smell of the actual paper money itself to drugs so much that he just alerts on all paper money automatically every time? Oh no, I'd tell you. Because we had a plan for that. It involved buying a large bag of shredded money straight from the official US money factory. Where slightly defective money - printed with a misalignment or something – was shredded and then sold as a novelty item. Or in my case, as a training aid. This was a common practice for drug dog handlers.



This bag of shredded money is about 2 feet long. It's five pounds, and it all smells exactly like US currency. Cause it is. And most importantly; it's all brand new clean and has never been contaminated by anything else, including and especially drugs.

Once a month or so I'd take handful of shredded currency and hide it somewhere while Kilo was in a training session sniffing out drugs. As a matter of routine, he ignored the smell of the shredded money and instead home in on the training aids made of real actual drugs. Just to be sure about everything, I handled the money and the drugs with disposable gloves, so whatever scent my hands had would not get stuck on the training aids. Smart drug dogs will key in on things like that and use them to their advantage. And then I'd record the training session on an official form, so if a defense attorney in the future ever wanted to challenge the drug dog in court, I'd be ready.

Now if you're on the criminals' side and want to point out that is most or all of US currency in public circulation must be certainly cross contaminated with trace amounts of drugs, I'd tell you that most if not all of US currency that is contaminated with drug scents is on a microgram level, which your average drug dog is not going to able to detect. Dogs' noses are superb, but there ARE limits. So when the dog alerts on drug money, it's because a drug dealer was handling it.

We also became regulars at the county jail; the supervisors there just loved it when we agreed to do some random cell searches. Every time I booked somebody into the jail I'd bring Kilo up to the booking area with me; the staff there enjoyed seeing Kilo and petting him. It gave them an interesting diversion from dealing with prisoners.





(Kilo's next hander continued that practice of bringing him into the jail intake area. One day they were in the intake/booking area as a prisoner was ranting and swearing at everybody. "Fuck you!" he yelled at a corrections officer. "And fuck you!" he yelled at another one. Just then, Kilo trotted in, surprising the prisoner who yelled out "And fuck you too, you dog!", to the great amusement of everybody present.)

Sometimes we'd also search the laundry room areas, which some of the more trusted prisoners had access to during certain hours. We never found any contraband, but we definitely had a high deterrent value.

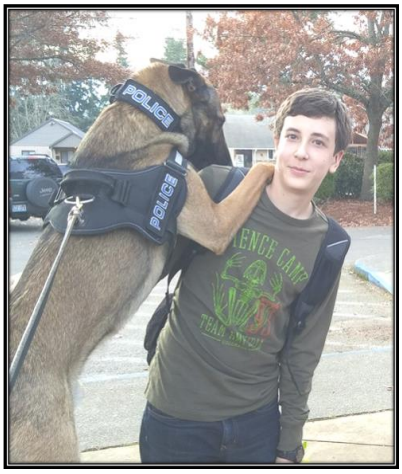




Here's the jail warden in his office, unsuccessfully pretending to have a serious conversation with Kilo:



Kilo and I also visited the boys' orthodontist office, Susan at her office, and pretty frequently, the schools. Simon was an 11th grader at the high school and Carter was an 8th grader in the middle school across the street.







Sometimes I'd wander in to the cafeterias during lunch times to visit with the boys; more than once we were able to sneak up behind them while they were busy talking with other kids. Simon will probably always remember the time he was eating lunch and looked down to see Kilo's long snoot appearing from behind him coming into view; it took Simon a moment for his brain to figure out what he was seeing closing in on his food! I always thought it was super cool that I could visit my boys during school with a police dog.





And because Kilo was friendly, I let anybody pet him. The school girls of course loved him, and I'd usually hang back and let Simon explain things to his classmates about the dog. Both boys got quite a "cool kid" boost from those impromptu show and tell sessions, especially when their classmates realized that Kilo the police dog lived at the house with them every day.





Also more than once I'd hand the leash over to Simon and let him walk Kilo into his next classroom. Again, I'd give them space and let Simon walk down the crowded hallways with Kilo, which was good for creating quite a bit of distraction from all the kids walking by. And more than once I'd stay for a little bit in some of the classrooms, answering questions for the teachers and students.

Susan was working at the high school in the main office, so she got to see Kilo at lot at work. She taught Kilo how to shake hands and be a gentleman, and work for the treats in her desk drawer.







And no visit to a school is complete without visiting the lunch ladies in the cafeteria.



Here we are working at a night football game. It actually wasn't necessary for me to bring Kilo – I could have easily left him at home – but I always got a lot more attention with the dog. We were also quite welcome into the announcers booth in the top of the stadium, even during the middle of the games.





Wasn't he just a damn fine good looking dog?!?





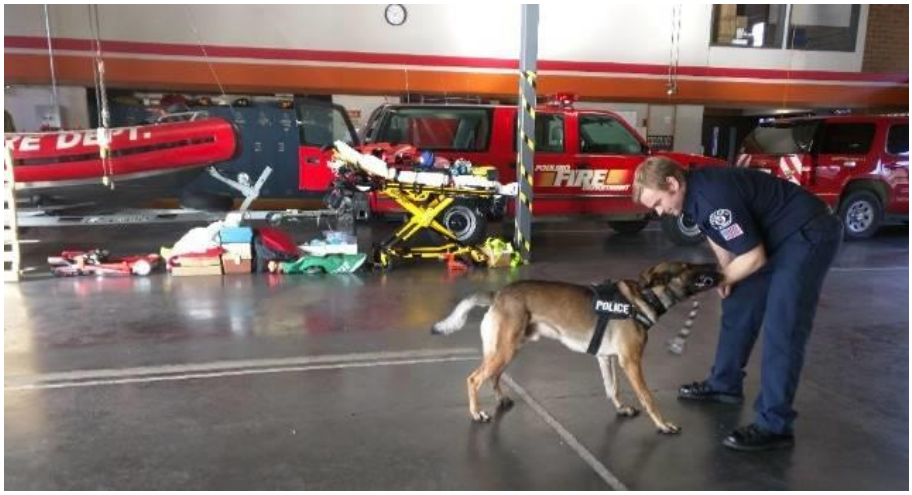


In addition to the Poulsbo high school and middle school; I made some appearances at the schools in Kingston; out of my jurisdiction but we were more than welcome there by the staff. The students there weren't used to seeking Kilo so it was kind of a big deal when we showed up one day and just walked around. The whole point was to make a presence and see which kids got really nervous, and especially to put them all on notice (the bad kids anyway) that a drug sniffing dog was around and could show up at any time.





The deterrent value of Kilo against criminals and criminal activity could not be overstated. Just the fact that he existed and was on duty sometimes was enough to dissuade at least a few drug users and dealers to start staying clear of Poulsbo. Example: One night we got called out to sniff some cars in a parking lot at one of the busier bars. An informant had some good information about a cocaine dealer. Kilo and I had to the search discretely and quickly in the dark and we managed to pull it off without any bar patrons noticing. Based on the good intel that we had, and adding in the K9 sniff that resulted in a positive alert for drug odor, a judge was called and he granted us a search warrant over the phone, which is called a telephonic warrant. The warrant was signed off by a judge (over the phone) and we got permission to search the one specific truck belonging to a cocaine dealer, while it was still parked in the front parking lot of the bar. When we found him in the bar and served him the warrant he decided to be agreeable to give us consent to search his truck, which meant basically he surrendered his keys to us so we didn't have to break anything. He had no cocaine stashes in his truck that night, just some powder residue here and there. So while he got away clean, he learned something about the Poulsbo Police that night. And when I ran Kilo around and into the truck again, I saw that the 20 or 30 people outside the bar watching were also getting a lesson about what kind of new resources the PPD had. And I know those folks told all their friends, and like I said while he didn't get any cocaine that night, the show we put on made a pretty clear impression to everybody present and after that, we didn't hear any more word on the street about cocaine dealing at that bar ever again.









In our small locker room at the station there was a walk-in shower, which was a perfect place to wash the dog. Every shower ended with me throwing a towel on him to stifle his urge to shake the water off; I had to then quickly rush him about 20 feet out in the garage where he was then free to shake off all the water he wanted there because it only took me once to see that shaking off in the locker room was a disaster. He learned to wait a few seconds and endure a fast escort into the garage, where he would then get a thorough drying off with towel after a good shake. On more than one occasion Officer Stacey gladly soaped him up. For some reason he tolerated the whole shower experience a lot more when she was in there with him. He got a shower about once a week, and we used regular old Johnson's baby shampoo.





To my consternation some officers would (affectionally) call him a "stinky dog" even after his shower. "He's not a stinky dog!" I yell back. "He's still wet from a shower!"

Some of my trainings were in Seattle and I got to ride the ferry and back instead of driving the long way around Puget Sound via Tacoma. It was fun to take Kilo up into the passenger cabin and walk around; he was a real attention getter. I actually didn't like a lot of people staring at me, but once I realized everybody was looking at him and not me, then I was okay with it.





Word got out that I was the new K9 cop and a private security firm contacted me one day; the guy who ran the company hired ex-cops and reserve officers and cops who were off-duty to do uniformed patrols for security gigs. He also had a couple nice patrol boats and he got contracts regularly to provide marine security for various events, like when a large oil drilling platform was towed into Seattle for repairs and all the environmentalists wanted to boat out there and protest it by hangings huge banners off it, so the oil company would call for a private security company with a boat, and this was this guy.

Anyway the guy who ran the company called me because he needed several K9 handlers to work at a big New Years' Event in Seattle. I'd be off duty, but in my regular uniform, with Kilo of course. The pay was pretty good and my bosses signed off on it, so I went over to Seattle on December 31st and froze my ass off for 8 hours standing outside the main entrance where 7,000 partygoers went into the place. Because Kilo was literally so professional looking – the combination of his bloodlines and his harness – we got the assignment to get posted front and center to the main doors.



I had no idea what I was in for so it was kind of shocking. First; this is what it looked like inside: multiple stages, multiple DJ's, a lot of lasers and lights and heavy marijuana smoke and really really loud music and Kilo really did not like being in there the couple times we went inside to look around. (the marijuana smoking in there was quite illegal but impossible to prevent)



Of the 7,000 in attendance (who paid $100 each to get in) about 6,900 of them were dressed, uh, like these ladies here:





The average age was about 24; I saw literally only about 5 people older than 30. About 40% of the attendees were men, the rest were of course women. Actually most of them did not look nearly as trim and fit as the ladies in these photos.

Also, after several hours of seeing everybody dressed like that, standing in the lines working their way up to the main doors, the novelty of near-naked women wore off pretty quickly and I actually began to really appreciate the few ladies who showed up wearing tight skimpy cocktail dresses – those at least left something to the imagination.

My job that night, with Kilo, was to be a deterrent, and encourage the partygoers to ditch any illicit drugs into nearby "amnesty" bins. Most of the kids bravely walked past us; they probably figured their small amounts of MDMA ("Molly") would be safe. And they were right, because I could not legally (ever) apply Kilo to a person. But still, some folks did panic and drop their small

bindles of pills or powder into the bins or straight onto the ground; when those were found Kilo told me in no uncertain terms that those substances were quite illegal. So while we didn't of course stop most of the drugs, the event promotors could point out to any critics that while yes, drugs do seem to be an integral part of the rave experience, there were drug dogs on duty and sincere efforts were made to minimize the drug smuggling. Of course I knew I was being used just to placate the critics but I was fine with that.

It was a very interesting experience but I declined to do it again the next year – standing outside for 8 hours in temperatures below freezing is not really my thing. Even though (after taxes) I made $250 dollars. The guy who ran the company also asked me to also come over to Seattle and work security at the Seahawks games. It was tempting, but I almost always worked on game days (Sundays) back then so I had to decline.

One of Kilo's parents was a full–blooded Malinois. Currently the preferred dog for outer perimeter security at the White House, and the number one preferred dog breed for SEAL Teams going into combat when they need war dogs. Sometimes Mals are referred to as "land sharks" or "maligators" since their front end is basically all teeth; sometimes also called "fur missiles" when they launch after bad guys.





You know how when you're playing tug with a dog, and the dog has to let go with his mouth to get a better grip on whatever it is you're playing with? And you know how some dogs are really, really fast when they do that? I learned to see the subtle warning signs coming when Kilo was going to go for a regrip. My skill at that was hard learned; I got a lot of toothy snapping "kilobites" on my hands when his jaws closed down on my fingers. Or hands. Or arms, even. I certainly wasn't alone; every family member and coworker who spent any time playing with Kilo got their share of tooth-grazed gnashed hands and arms; sometimes there would be blood. And then I'd tell them "Hey congratulations you've just joined the Too Slow Club!" I of course got more kilobites than anybody else. Below is a rare example of an upper arm kilobite; usually the wounds were sustained to fingers. And because my boys and Susan played with Kilo a lot, they go their share of kilobites.





I remember one time when Carter was playing ball with Kilo in the backyard and Kilo grabbed for the ball in his hands and got a mouthful of Carter's shirt instead. And then he decided he didn't want to let go. I was laughing too hard for the longest time before I could give him the command in German to let go of the boy's shirt, which was decidedly worse for the wear after that. I told him to keep wearing the shirt to school anyway; he could truthfully tell the other kids that the hole was caused by an attack from a police dog. Which is a pretty unique excuse.

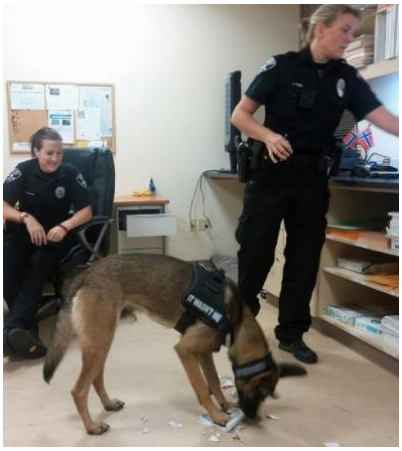


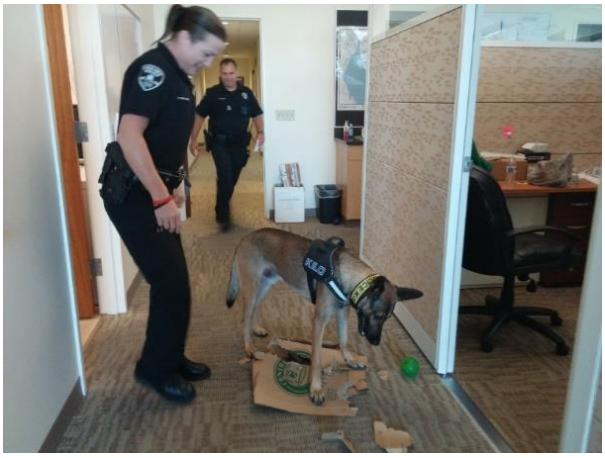




Which reminds me – as fierce as he looked, Kilo was actually quite the loverboy. I'm sure he had been tested to be an attack/tracking/patrol dog but he no doubt flunked the part about chasing and biting people; he was too gentle for that. But there were many times I'd wish that he could just at least growl on command and look mean to some bad guys who deserved it. He also had a habit of leaning when people petted him; he'd totally just lean onto anybody's legs; people who were really into dogs would then say "Oh he's a leaner!" which was a thing, apparently.

He also liked shredding things; fortunately it was limited to just a few things like pizza boxes, or balls of crumped paper. When I tossed him a ball of paper or cardboard, he'd oblige and go into his Mobile Biological Shredding Unit mode and tear it into a lot of wet little pieces, to the great amusement of anybody watching.



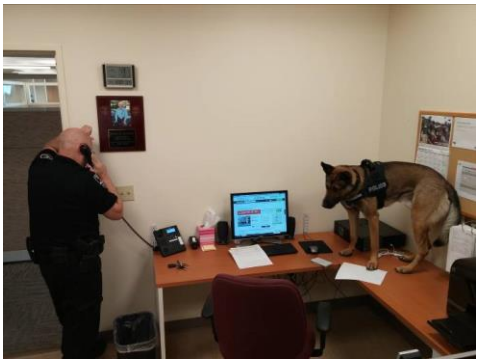


Now because it was important for working dogs to not be shy about jumping up onto counters or cars or decks or anything, I kept Kilo well exercised in doing that. I could get him to jump on just about anything within reach with a simple snap of my fingers in the general direction. Only once did he misread me and interpret a casual hand wave as a "JUMP UP HERE" and to my great horror, he once suddenly jumped up onto the head librarians' counter at the high school library, completely knocking over and destroying a small tabletop zen sand garden display she had.





Because he was a high-energy dog, he needed some regular running around, even in the office. He had a good supply of squeaky balls, and I would regularly throw a ball down the hallway. If he didn't catch it on a bounce he'd invariably slide at the end of the hallway, sometimes by several feet, and sometimes even ending with a slam into the door at the end of the work hall.







As a K9 handler I qualified to get a jumpsuit issued to me. It was a custom fit thing, handmade by Blumenthal Uniforms in Seattle. Cost almost $500 bucks. It was awesome because it did not collect dog hair at all, unlike all the other police uniforms. Which is why when and if you ever see any pictures of police dog handlers, they are almost always wearing utility jumpsuits that are resistant to mud and dirt and dog fur and dog slobber.





Being a K9 Handler got me involved in a few drug raids, coordinated by the undercover and uniformed officers assigned to the Special Operations Group; a force manned by a half dozen cops from different local agencies. Their mission was to work big drug cases and take down the dealers who were supplying drugs to the local criminals. The SOG had their own private headquarters in a secret warehouse location in Bremerton. They relied on patrol officers catching drug users out on the streets who would be agreeable to becoming a confidential informant in exchange for a lighter sentence. Most drug addicts would never consider becoming a "snitch" but some thought it was better than years and years in prison. The CI's would share information about their dealers, and some of them would do controlled buys from their dealers, using cash supplied by the SOG undercover officers. The buys would be recorded and after several buys, a standard 12-page search warrant would be approved by a judge and it would door-kicking-in time. The ultimate goal would be to get the drug dealers to cough up information on their suppliers, and then go kick in their doors. Each level up would yield more cash and drugs; an ideal end to a case involved arresting big time dealers, usually in Seattle or Tacoma, and sending the whole case to a Federal Court.



A typical drug raid briefing would include all the SOG operatives, a couple of uniformed patrol officers with marked police cars, a drug dog and handler, and sometimes a patrol dog and handler, in case somebody wanted to try running away. A supervisor or two would oversee the briefing and sign off on everything. The whole thing is kind of interesting so I'll describe it here: First, everybody gets a 10 or 15 or 20 page copy of the master plan, which would cover everything including a comprehensive safety plan and risk analysis and it lays out the roles and duties for everybody involved.

The packet of paperwork starts with a briefing location, then the raid location, and a bunch of checkboxes for what kind of an operation is going down (search warrant, drug lab bust, buy and bust or buy and walk, etc) and the communications protocol is described, with cell phone numbers of the officers and agents participating, and main and back-up radio frequencies. Then there's a checklist for other police agencies notified and/or participating, and who has the before and during surveillance assignments.



There would be some pages devoted to suspect information: who they are, what they look like, what they're driving, and their criminal history. Usually includes mug shots, DOL photos, and surveillance photos of their cars and the target house.

Sometimes the interior layout of the house is known, because one or more informants were inside. If the inside of the house a mystery, it is possible to estimate which rooms are where based on outside clues. I actually went to a training once for that; how to identify sink vent pipes on the roof to figure out where the sinks are (bathrooms and kitchen); dryer vents on the sides of house show where the laundry room would be; small opaque windows are usually for bathrooms, chimney stacks or vent pipes indicate where heaters are, etc. Armed with that knowledge is not too difficult to figure out which rooms are where inside.

Also important was the notation that the raid event had been recorded with the Western States Information Network, part of the Regional Information Sharing System Program. A kind of a central clearinghouse, they kept track of all the drug buys and drug busts from every agency who bothered to check in with them. It was a pretty good idea because there had been a few too many times when undercover cops from one drug task force here and there had sold drugs to, um, other undercover cops from other task forces. Aside from the general waste of time and resources, it was of course rather dangerous (and professionally embarrassing) when different task forces of undercover cops wound up trying to arrest other task forces. So a central check-in agency with national oversight was formed to prevent major conflicts like that. It was also helpful when undercover cops were doing covert surveillance or drug buys and didn't want or need any other departments to come blasting in less than a block away with some kind of other major police operation at the exact wrong time and place; drug deals work best when the local patrol officers are not anywhere nearby.

More pages for noting the nearest hospital and fire station with medic units in case things went really sideways. And known hazards at the site were noted, like large propane tanks or pit bulls or fences that would be too difficult to breach or climb over, or if the bad guys had their own surveillance cameras pointed outside.

Another page or two to outline the general mission and explain what the bad guys had been doing to deserve extra special attention. If other people might be in the house but were known to be not involved in the criminal activity (like kids or grandparents or innocent roommates) than that would be noted, too.

Some operational plans had a "Plan A" and a "Plan B" and a "Plan C" in anticipation of possible contingencies.

There was a page for a risk analysis checklist, which would include elements like how many suspects would probably be present, what was their propensity for violence, did any of them have a military background, was the target site fortified or booby trapped or under video surveillance, was there a potential for hostage taking, what kind of weapons were going to be present, were there multiple escape routes, large amounts of narcotics, hidden rooms or compartments, and what was the floor plan?

Then some pages to detail which officers would be performing the specific duties during the event: Most operations had: A supervisor/incident commander, a case agent/interviewer, a tactical entry team, perimeter security and surveillance units, prisoner transport for afterward, and uniformed patrol officers in police cars to block off the nearest roads and route traffic around the scene. The uniformed officers also made a visible police presence so nearby residents and people walking or driving by would understand it was a police operation, which was sometimes hard to discern if the perimeter guys were in camouflage. A K9 unit or two might be needed; a patrol/tracking dog if a bad guy bolted and needed to be chased, and a drug dog to help

find the illegal narcotics hidden in the house to be searched. The entry team guys, usually 5 or 6, would include a door breacher armed with a door ram for knocking in the front door. Once the entry team busted in and arrested all the occupants in the house, they'd divide into other roles; some would photograph everything, some would collect evidence, and some would interview the bad guys. If a meth lab was present, then a cleanup team would be present to go in with hazmat suits and cart out the chemicals and equipment.

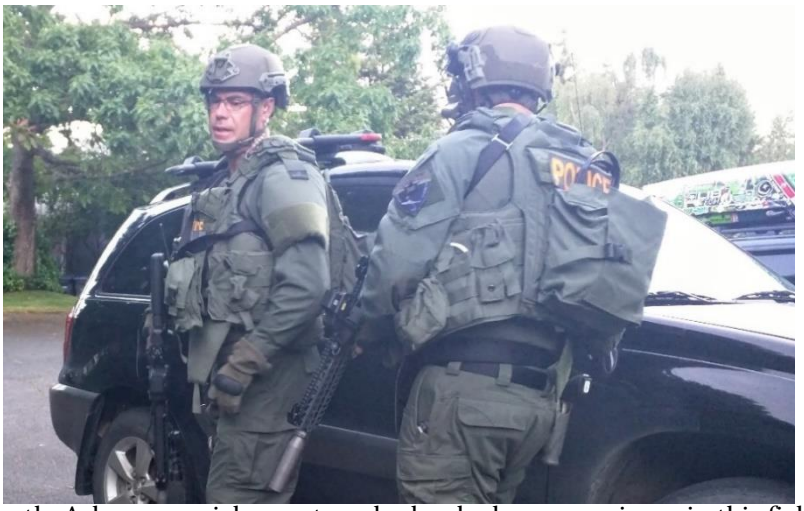
There would be photos of the house, both publicly available pics and usually covert photos taken in the week or two previous to the operation. And there would be a copy of the official search warrant, the probable cause statement, a brief history of any drug sales made to undercover officers or informants, and a map of where the house is exactly. The amount of the research and preparation for these events was always pretty impressive.

After the briefing everybody would load up. Usually the SOG guys would pile into a large unmarked van and then we'd all close in on the target house, which would usually be already under observation. The general goal would be to catch as many bad guys there as possible. This meant that as a general rule, there would be some waiting involved to make sure that the wanted bad guys were in fact home and not out running errands. Sometimes we'd stage a mile or two away and wait literally for a few hours, until the surveillance team (in unmarked cars) would see the main guys show up; then we'd roll in.

The van would stop around the corner from the target house, and the entry team would jump out and line up close; each guy would even have one hand on the shoulder of the guy in front of him; with their other hand they had their rifles and pistols out in a "low ready" aim. The guy in front would have a riot shield, and everybody had a ballistic helmet. If they were wearing civilian clothes (they almost always did) then they would strap on ballistic vests over their shirts or jackets, complete with large POLICE lettering. (Yes I know you want some pictures of these operations but I knew better than to ever ask the other guys)

Marked patrol car units would then position themselves either in front of the house, behind the house, and at the both ends of the street to assure the general public the situation was under control and official.

The entry team would go up to the house, use a battering ram to blow the door open, and then they'd pour and grab everybody inside. Once the house was secure, one or more detectives would separate and interview the suspects; another detective would photograph everything in the house, and then the searching would begin.



That's where I would come in. I'd first do a walk-through of the house to see if there was anything dangerous that might trip up or injure Kilo, and I'd a get an idea of what the house rooms looked like. If there were any cats present we'd send them out or lock them up in a room or cabinet, then I'd make sure the back door was closed and then I'd bring in the Kilo, preferably off-leash and tell him to go sniff out the drugs. On a fun scale, this whole operation – except for the waiting part – was pretty high.

Now despite all the planning, every single search operation had at least one thing go wrong, mostly because the bad guys didn't read the plan and didn't know what their roles were exactly. This is a universal truth. Ask any special operator who has had any experience in this field and they'll whole heartedly agree. The bad guys might not be at the house when it's hit, or they don't have all their drugs with them at that time, or they don't have the cash we want, or maybe other people would be present who weren't supposed to be there, or any number of other complications possible or probable. Every single operation I participated in had at least one snag. I remember one night at a trailer out in a field; we're executing a search warrant and the old lady who lived with her criminal son there came out on the front porch with a shotgun and starting yelling at us to get off her property. "I'm going to call the police!" She kept yelling. "We ARE the police! Put your gun down!" we had to yell back.



One of the consequences of being a K9 handler meant I got involved in a lot of bigger than average police cases, because when drugs were involved, and guns and cash and cars and property seized, and defendants were looking at lengthy prison sentences; that was when the defense attorneys got really involved. A majority of those cases were scheduled for trial instead of the usual plea agreements being made right away. So I started getting a lot of legal subpoenas to appear in court. At one point I had almost a dozen active ones that I had to keep track of. Here are a couple of typical court summons/subpoenas:

IN THE KITSAP COUNTY SUPERIOR COURT

STATE OF WASHINGTON,) No. 15-1-01021-1
)
Plaintiff,) SUBPOENA
)
v.) LE #: 2015SO008271
) DOV: August 28, 2015
) Crime: 69.50.4013.Meth
ERICA BRYNNE CARTER,)
Age: 36; DOB: 02/14/1979,)
)
Defendant.)

GREETINGS TO: NICK E. HOKE, (360)536-1663. You are hereby commanded to appear at–
Kitsap County Superior Court
614 Division Street, Ms-24
Port Orchard, Wa 98366-4683

Courtroom to be determined, from January 25 - 29, 2016, at 9:00 AM, to give evidence on behalf of the Prosecution and to remain in attendance until discharged. HEREIN FAIL NOT AT YOUR PERIL.

It is possible that this case will not commence on the date and/or time stated on this subpoena since the Defendant may have previously pleaded guilty, the matter may have been continued due to court congestion, or for other reasons. The case may be continued for weeks. **This subpoena, however, remains in effect and imposes a continuing duty to appear until you are discharged from this subpoena by the court or by our office.** It is important that you remain in contact with our office as described below.

Your **Contact Person** for this subpoena is Karyn A. Szymanski, 360-337-7239. Anytime after 3:00 PM on the business day before the scheduled hearing/trial, you must call your Contact Person prior to coming to the Courthouse so you are not inconvenienced and listen to the voice mail regarding any details about the above case. If you have any scheduling difficulties, please call your Contact Person immediately.

You may not be expected to be present for the entire hearing/trial. When you call as outlined above, we will advise you of any scheduling changes and of the day and approximate time you will be needed to testify. No attendance and/or mileage fees will be allowed unless for each day when you come to court, you claim your attendance and/or mileage by initially signing in at the Clerk's Office and also checking out when through testifying.

DATED: January 8, 2016
PLACE: Port Orchard, WA

STATE OF WASHINGTON

COREEN E. SCHNEPF, WSBA No. 37966
Deputy Prosecuting Attorney

Prosecutor's File Number–15-186246-9

Nick E. Hoke
Po Box 98
Poulsbo, Wa 98370

☐ I deposited this Subpoena in the mails of the United States of America with a properly stamped and addressed envelope, by first class mail, postage prepaid, directed to the following person–
☒ This Subpoena was placed in the recognized system for interoffice written communication, for personal service by law enforcement, directed to the following person–
Nick E. Hoke

I certify (or declare) under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of Washington that the foregoing is true and correct to the best of my knowledge, information and belief.

Dated: January 8, 2016

Place: Port Orchard, WA

Karyn A. Szymanski

IN THE POULSBO MUNICIPAL COURT

CITY OF POULSBO,) No. 170012041
)
Plaintiff,) SUBPOENA
)
v.) LE #: H17-001204
) DOV: August 11, 2017
) Crime: Reckless Driving
THERESA CAUDILL RICE,)
Age: 63 DOB: 03/15/1954)
)
Defendant.)

GREETINGS TO: OFFICER N. HOKE. You are hereby commanded to appear at–

POULSBO MUNICIPAL COURT
200 NE MOE STREET
POULSBO, WA 98370

Courtroom, on July 11, 2018, at 11:00 AM, to give evidence on behalf of the Prosecution and to remain in attendance until discharged. HEREIN FAIL NOT AT YOUR PERIL.

It is possible that this case will not commence on the date and/or time stated on this subpoena since the Defendant may have previously pleaded guilty, the matter may have been continued due to court congestion, or for other reasons. The case may be continued for weeks. **This subpoena, however, remains in effect and imposes a continuing duty to appear until you are discharged from this subpoena by the court or by our office.** It is important that you remain in contact with our office as described below.

Your **Contact Person** for this subpoena is **Kaye Davis at (360) 394-9709. Please contact our office at 10:00 AM on the day of trial to find out what time you will be needed to testify in this case. If this is a subpoena for a 3.5 hearing, please be at the courthouse at the specified time on the subpoena.**

You may not be expected to be present for the entire hearing/trial. When you call as outlined above, we will advise you of any scheduling changes and of the day and approximate time you will be needed to testify.

DATED: June 7, 2018
PLACE: Poulsbo, WA

CITY OF POULSBO

Alexis T. Foster, WSBA No 37032
City Prosecutor

☐ I deposited this Subpoena in the mails of the United States of America with a properly stamped and addressed envelope, by first class mail, postage paid, directed to the following person –
☑ This Subpoena was placed in the recognized system for interoffice written communication, for personal service by law enforcement, directed to the following person –
Officer N. Hoke

I certify (or declare) under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of Washington that the foregoing is true and correct to the best of my knowledge, information and belief.

Dated: June 7, 2018
Place: Poulsbo, WA

Kaye Davis

Here's me right after I testified in Superior Court for a big drug case I had participated in. The defendant had managed to delay the case for about 18 months but finally it went to trial and I got on the stand and testified to my involvement in the case and then the jury later decided the defendant was guilty of whatever the charge was, I don't remember so don't ask cause I don't care anymore. I never enjoyed testifying in court in front of jurors. I was glad when that was over.



I had to produce a legal affidavit of our qualifications, which was kept on file at the county clerk's office for the superior court judges to refer to if necessary. I also included it in some of my police reports for the prosecutors (and defense attorneys) so they knew exactly who they were dealing with. It looked like this:

****

MARCH 2016 AFFIDAVIT: POULSBO POLICE OFFICER NICK HOKE & K9 "KILO":

My name is Nick Hoke, I am the Poulsbo Police Department's Narcotic Detection K9 handler. I received a police commission from the Washington State Criminal Justice Training Center's Police Academy class 403 in 1993 and I have been employed as a full-time law enforcement officer with the Poulsbo Police Department continuously since then. In addition to working as a patrol officer I have had a variety of specialty assignments and duties and I have attended numerous classes, courses, seminars, and conferences over the past 23+ years that have included trainings in the identification and recognition of various narcotics to include marijuana, methamphetamine, heroin, cocaine, prescription drugs and other illicit street drugs, contraband, and paraphernalia. I am very familiar with the various physical appearances and typical odors associated with these drugs and how they are commonly packaged for personal use and possession, distribution, concealment, transport, and sale.

In August 2014 I graduated from a two-week 80 hour Drug Detection K9 Handler Course in New Smyrna Beach Florida at the Southern Coast K9 Training Center, working with my K9 partner "Kilo", a German Shepherd/Belgian Malinois imported from Germany. Kilo and I received there our first certification in Drug Detection, issued by the United States Police Canine Association. In October 2014, Kilo and I received our Washington State certification from the Pacific Northwest Police Detection Dog Association after meeting the training, testing, and certification requirements set forth by the Washington State Criminal Justice Training Commission and Washington Administrative Code for Narcotics Detection Dogs and Handlers, as described in WAC 139-05-915 (3b): Narcotics Dog Handler. In May of 2015 we successfully passed our WA state certification test again, at a weeklong PNWPDDA training conference in Boise, Idaho.

Kilo is trained to detect and passively alert to the following controlled substance odors: Methamphetamine, Cocaine, and Heroin, Crack Cocaine and MDMA/Ecstasy. Kilo does not alert to any odors associated with marijuana or marijuana products, and he does not alert to uncirculated US currency. Kilo has never been trained to detect or alert to any marijuana or marijuana products; as a matter of routine he ignores marijuana and he has even demonstrated the ability to find illegal narcotics hidden in a cannabis store that had over a quarter million dollars' worth of marijuana in the building, with no alerts to any of the marijuana present.

When Kilo is given the command to sniff for the narcotic odors that he is trained to detect, if and when he detects those specific odor(s) he will exhibit specific changes of behavior and pinpoint the source of the odor as close as he can. His trained final passive response is a sit and stare. I am trained and experienced in recognizing his behaviors and definitive alerts to those illegal narcotic odors that he is trained to recognize and alert to.

I train with Kilo regularly using training aids that are state-lab confirmed narcotics; we average 20 hours a month. We have trained with K9 units and K9 instructors from numerous municipal, county, tribal, state, and federal agencies and departments and we average about 30 in-field applications and call outs per year. Kilo has extensive experience sniffing for illegal narcotic odors in cars, trucks, busses, motorcycles, buildings, barns, sheds, boats, ships, and fields. Our training sessions routinely include the following techniques:

- Exposure to (and "proofing off of") a large variety of masking agents and distracting odors of all kinds, including marijuana and uncirculated US currency

- Searching "blank" areas (buildings/rooms/vehicles) that have no illegal drugs hidden in them

- Searching areas "blind" in which neither the dog nor myself know where the narcotics have been hidden

- Searching blank areas "blind" in which no actual training aids (drugs) have been hidden by assisting officers

Kilo's track record of consistently, accurately, and reliably detecting and alerting to illegal narcotic odors is well documented. Our training logs and field performance records are maintained, current to date, and on file.

I, Nick Hoke, declare under the penalty of perjury of the laws of the State of Washington the above statement is true and correct.

_____ _____ _____

POULSBO POLICE OFFICER NICK HOKE #K610 DATE PLACE

****

And here is an example of one of my end of the year report - the one page version. The first two months are blank because we weren't officially certified yet in 2015.

POULSBO POLICE DEPARTMENT
NARCOTIC DETECTION K9 UNIT
2015 YEAR IN REVIEW

Monthly K9 Training: 286 hours

January	20 hours	February	24 hours	March	20 hours
April	21 hours	May	52 hours	June	21 hours
July	21 hours	August	21 hours	Sept	21 hours
October	25 hours	November	20 hours	December	20 hours

Call Outs:

date	*agency*	*what was sniffed*	*alert?*	*source of odor:*
3-7	PPD	impounded car + cash	Y	cash: $5,741
3-7	PPD	us currency: $10,064	Y	cash: $10,064
3-9	SOG	large residence in Poulsbo	Y	residual odor only
3-11	SOG	small apt. in Tacoma	Y	empty baggies
4-3	SOG	blue Mustang sniff at SOG HQ	Y	engine compt. and fabric gun holster
4-8	SOG	gold Camry+cash+lock box	Y	2.5g heroin, 3g meth
4-16	PPD	student backpacks at school	N	nothing found
4-29	SOG	apartment in Tacoma	Y	nothing found
5-23	WSP	roadside car Hwy 3	Y	small baggie with very small pills
7-20	WSP	crashed car SR 305	N	nothing found
7-29	PPD	impounded car	N	nothing found
7-30	PPD	prostitution sting/task force	Y	SUV in garage; meth pipe and 9g meth
8-20	KCSO	roadside car	Y	meth pipe, 18 pills, 2 hand guns (serial # ground off)
8-28	KCSO	roadside car	Y	meth pipe and 3.1g meth
9-2	PPD	roadside car	Y	paraphernalia
9-3	WESTNET	drug house	N	went into stand-by mode; had to leave before search
9-5	BIPD	impounded car at BIPW	Y	paraphernalia +0.35g meth +1.48g meth+ scales
9-10	KCSO	roadside motorcycle	Y	multiple alerts on handlebar; nothing found in bike
9-18	PPD	two trucks in parking lot	Y	multiple alerts but no warrant granted
10-9	BIPD	impounded van at BIPW	Y	1g meth, paraphernalia, heroin residue
10-10	PPD	impounded car in garage	Y	paraphernalia + heroin 3 g
10-19	BPD	motel car, cash box, cash	Y	cash: $1,205 + 102.6g heroin + 4.6g meth
10-22	SOG	car + currency sniff	Y	cash: $6,970 + paraphernalia
10-30	PPD	pickup truck	Y	empty baggie, alerts on center console
11-2	SPD	bathroom + car+ article	Y	paraphernalia & .1g heroin
12-12	BPD	house and car	Y	paraphernalia in car
12-27	PPD	impounded car	Y	meth .02g & paraphernalia

Total number of field deployments/call outs in 2015: 27

In 2015, Kilo's first full year at the PPD, I had contacted the local newspaper; the North Kitsap Herald (circulation 12,000 weekly) to get him added to their Reader's Choice Awards "Best of.." annual contest, for the category of "Best Police Officer." They obliged and added his name to the short list of recommended top votes (although anybody could put any name down for any category, like "Best Barista" or "Best Deli" or "Best Barber" or "Best Realtor" etc.) and I think a lot of folks were amused when they saw that they could vote for a dog as the best police officer in North Kitsap. I was not surprised when he won, and didn't mind that he bumped me down the list. That annual event had been going on for about 10 years and frankly I was getting a little embarrassed that my name was in the top three virtually every single year; I did come out in first place I think a total of 6 or 7 times in the previous 10 years or so.





From then on, Kilo was on the list permanently and kept winning First Place year after year. Although when we hired Dan Schoonmaker from Westminster PD in California to be our new Police Chief, he was not thrilled when I told the public's #1 officer was…a….a…dog. The Chief just stared at me blankly from behind his desk. "You're telling me that of all the officers here, the voting public ranked a dog over everybody else." I smiled broadly at him. "Yep, hilarious, isn't it!" His blank look back at me continued for a enough time to start to make me feel uncomfortable. "Frankly, I find that to be an insult to every hard-working officer on this department here." My smiled faded. "Oh, uh, well, I've never thought of it from that viewpoint before, Chief." I kind of nodded my head and continued "I guess I see where you're coming from.." I then had to explain to him that none of the officers ever took the poll seriously at all, and that none of them were upset that Kilo's name came out on top and in fact they all liked it. It took a long time for the Chief to get over that one. Guess who came out top dog for the next year? And the year after that? The last time I checked, Kilo was still on a roll and holding onto his title.

Being a K9 handler means learning to get used to dog hair. Everywhere. My patrol car especially. I wasn't real tolerant of dog hair floating around in my car so once a week I'd go find an empty field or parking lot where Kilo could run around while I attacked my rig with a cordless leaf blower. Which, I gotta say, works even better than vacuuming; I'd open every door and the back and just blow the hell out of the whole thing for several minutes. It worked well; I met a few other K9 handlers who were quite impressed with the overall cleanliness of my ride. Most K9 handlers that I met seemed resigned to the fur and just let it collect in piles in the floors and corners of their patrol cars.

And I also had to get used to dog slobber. During trainings and actual deployments/searches, there was always a lot of play time with the Kong and that thing got really slippery with frothy wet dog slobber, which then got all over my hands and uniform. That was one thing that I could not ever get comfortable with, unlike probably most dog handlers who resigned themselves to getting dog slobber on their hands so often they'd just wipe them dry on their uniforms and carry on.

Here we are with the boys, doing a 10k fun run in Seattle:







At the end of the run I was pretty much done but Kilo was acting like he could keep going and repeat it a couple more time, easily. BTW, if you think running with a dog is going to help your pace…it won't. Even a little sideways pulling on the leash every now and then is enough to wear a guy down.







Okay so things were going great, and then all of a sudden they weren't. To make a long, drama-filled story short, the police chief got fired for inappropriate behavior with the new young blonde female patrol officer.

This left us suddenly without a chief. The mayor, desperate to find somebody to run the ship, hired back a former old deputy chief to be an interim – temporary – police chief. His state police commission had long expired, so instead of "Police Chief" he was hired as a "Public Safety Director", and he would not get a uniform. He was fine with that, because his special contract pay was $10,000 a month. All he had to do was keep the place from imploding; no new projects required.

As the ink was drying, the deputy chief called me into his office. He told me that he had some bad news, and he felt bad to be the messenger, but he was going to help me get through this. "The new chief, as it turns out, is deadly allergic to dogs. The only way he would take this job is if Kilo can stay out of the office while he's here." My jaw dropped, because this is what we would call a major change in working conditions. "So I have to leave Kilo in the garage every time I come into the office?" I asked. "Well hang on, " he continued. "It gets a little worse. The chief is so allergic, Kilo can't come into the office AT ALL, even when he's not here." The deputy chief looked sad. "I know this sucks, and I'll do what I can to make this better for you and Kilo, but yeah..he's going to have to stay out of the office."

Well isn't that interesting. That conversation was actually a complete work of fiction; it didn't happen. It should have, but didn't. No, what really happened is that the deputy chief, walking by me one morning – literally in passing – said "Nick! Have you heard the news?" I said "Uh..no?" Barely looking at me, he continued walking and said "Don't bring Kilo into the office anymore, the new chief is allergic to dogs." And then he kept walking. Sympathy level: zero. I was stunned.

I knew it would take probably 8 months for the city to find and hire a new chief. 8 months of my partner being banished from the office, where he loved to run into every day (actually several times a day) and play with the clerks and other officers. I realized that this was going to piss me off and leave me in a permanent, constant state of bitterness for about, oh, the next 8 months. So I did a rage quit, and told my sergeant to go find a new k9 handler, who would be so happy to get the job that he wouldn't be half as bitter as me.

Kilo did great with his next handler, Officer Craig Keller. Craig let Kilo into his house, and he even let him sleep on his bed. He told me that it was a common occurrence for Kilo to move over to Craig's side of the bed when he got up and if he came back and tried to shove Kilo off his pillow Kilo would usually growl at him. And Craig and Kilo went on to have lots of adventures together, and they caught a lot of bad guys, and literally dozens of drug dealer cars were impounded and searched, with varying levels of success.



Was I sad to leave turn over the leash? Yes, of course. But it was better for me than to be royally pissed off every day for the next eight months. Which was, in fact, how long it took to hire the next new police chief.

By my estimate, I think I got in about 60% of all the K9 experiences, out of 100% that I could have accrued if I had done it for another 5 or 6 years. Meaning I missed out on 40% of the other experiences I think I would have, like doing some training or work in the King County jail, or the SeaTac airport, or at some of Seattle's bigger sports arenas, and doing more big drug busts with other departments or agencies. But in the end, my sixty percent fulfilled me just fine. I'm glad I took as many pictures that I did, although I wish I had taken a few more.

So that was my experience as a K9 handler. It was a lot of work and although I was glad to be done with it, I never regretted the time I spent doing it and I'm glad I had the opportunity to have all those unique experiences.



EPILOGUE



In 2015 a national police officer satisfaction survey was conducted and the results showed that a majority of cops, if they had to do it all over again, would have greatly preferred being firefighters instead. I couldn't really see myself as a firefighter/EMT/paramedic kind of guy, and although I can look back on my police career with pride, there were a lot of tough moments that I wish I could have just not experienced. The guy who first raised his hand to take an oath and get a shiny new badge with "610" on it was not the same guy who put that badge in a display many years later.

In 2018, the leading cause of death for police officers across the country became not car accidents, and not shooting by bad guys..but suicide. Which does not help the stats for life expectancy for cops, which depending upon the studies you cite, show cops live 10 or even 20 years less than the average civilian.

I retired just shy of 27 years. Physically I was actually still in remarkably good shape; a little softer and fatter than I wanted to be, but no major injuries had been sustained, and I never wound up on light duty behind a desk to recover after a surgery on a wrist or a knee or a shoulder or a back or neck or ankle or anything like that. Unlike a very high majority of my coworkers.

Mentally, though, I had gotten pretty tired of police work. If you were to make a list of the top 10 or 15 things why you think I was growing weary of it all, yeah, your list would be totally correct and probably only halfway complete.

When I first got hired back in 1993 (actually my testing was in 1992) policing was a coveted career to pursue. My department had two new openings, and over 120 eager candidates applied. Fast forward a couple of decades and the numbers were quite different; when we wanted to hire a new officer we were lucky to get maybe 10 applicants. And usually at least half would be disqualified pretty quickly based on their background. This was not just a local problem; it was a nationwide challenge for police departments everywhere to find good, qualified applicants. Why do you think that is? Go back to the list you just made, and yeah..there you go.

For better or worse, being a career police officer changed me. Not completely, just in some aspects. I took some notes over the years and now, at page 487 of this rambling mess, I think I've found a place for them; not so much for your reading pleasure or education, but more just a place for me to archive my thoughts for posterity without just deleting them outright.

I call this end part: Changes and Consequences of Being A Cop.



Okay, here we go with the beginning of the very end:

I trust people a lot less now. Because I met enough nice-looking folks, nice-acting folks, and very seemingly normal people who turned out to have significant underlying secret and degenerative character defects. I have come to the horrible sad realization that you can never really know somebody. You may think you know a person, but really, you can't know. After seeing a lot of seemingly decent people get caught with child pornography, or get caught embezzling, or get caught with a drug habit or whatever, I decided I could no longer give wholeheartedly good references or opinions on anybody ever again, but instead I'd have add the qualifier "well he SEEMED like a good guy.." Because who knows what evil lurks in the hearts of men? So now, yes, I have trust issues with people.

Just on principal, I do not like guns pointed in my direction. Even if a gun is unloaded, do not point it anywhere near me. Not only that, don't point even a toy gun toward me. It's just bad form.

I've met a lot of gross folks; enough so that as a general rule, I really don't like shaking hands with anybody. (If I ever shake your had, consider yourself blessed) When the fist bump was invented I used that a lot when I could, but if somebody caught me off guard or I didn't want to be rude and I had to shake a hand, then I always felt a little uncomfortable until I could go disinfect it. I always had sanitizer in my patrol car, and I used it several times a day. One time when I found myself shaking hands with a

filthy drug addict I felt better after wiping my hand off on the ground as soon as he left, to the great amusement of a citizen watching me.

For two of my houses, I had fences and gates across the driveway. Fake security cameras were also utilized, and I always, always locked my car whenever I parked it anywhere. Garage sales or yard sales at my house were of course out of the question; I didn't like the idea of random weirdos walking onto my property and looking around at anything I had in my garage and noting what kind of door locks I had, or if there were security sensors visible or absent, etc.

I don't give money to "homeless" beggars on street corners. Because I've seen too many who weren't actually homeless. I knew one local guy in his late 20's, a heroin junkie who certainly looked homeless but he lived with his grandmother in town, and she even fed him. He didn't have a job. Too lazy. But every other day or so he'd trudge over to a busy intersection and hold up a cardboard sign that read "ANYTHING HELPS" and every once in a while somebody passing by in a car would hand him some cash. Thinking that they were helping him out. What they were really doing was encouraging him to not get a real job. And the money he got went straight to feed his addiction, not food or rent. Just about every homeless person I ever met was too lazy to get a real job. Yes, a lot of them had mental problems of all kinds, but they were also lazy. And I don't reward laziness. Especially with cash.

I had way, way more than my share of nighttime bad dreams in which my starring role was Me, as a Police Officer. Not too often, but usually a couple a month, that I would remember. Fortunately I was almost always able to wake myself up before things got too bad in my dreams. As for other police related dreams in which I was on the job, in uniform as a Professional Problem Solver and/or as a highly experienced, trained, professional and authorized Emergency Vehicle Operator, those were usually several per week. Sigh. At least though, I can report that in 99 percent of my police related dreams when I was dreaming of doing police stuff, I was the one winning the fights or the chases. But I still hated every single one because even when they were boring police-themed dreams, I had a very long list of other things I'd rather be dreaming about. So I made a concerted effort to not to try and remember my stupid dreams. If anybody ever invents a dream exchanged program, I'll gladly participate; I know there a plenty of folks out there who would like to pretend they're cops. To this day, I still have an average of SEVERAL police-related dreams PER WEEK, that I know of/can remember. I've resigned myself to that this is probably going to be a permanent condition, because I also still have stupid frequent dreams of being back in the Navy, and I only did that for 3 years active and 3 reserve.

I had to be careful where I got food while in uniform – there were plenty of times when I recognized the guys putting hamburgers together at Burger King as career criminals or young stupid punks I had recently given tickets to - or even arrested. At any given time there would be at least one fast food joint in town on the 'Do Not Go To" list because they had known bad guys working there. I had many coworkers who absolutely refused to eat at most or even all of the local fast food restaurants; one of them for a good reason; he actually got his burger spit into by the guy making it.



Some officers would put pictures of their family on their patrol car dashboards. Sooner or later they'd learn the hard way that wasn't a good idea because it only takes one really drunk or pissed off client in the back seat going to jail to make a comment like "Hey officer is that a picture of your wife? She sure is pretty…"

I picked up my mail at the post office instead of having it delivered to my mailbox; I met too many mail theft victims to ever even think about having a mailbox out by the road.

I know that there are a lot of mentally unbalanced crazy people out there - way more than the average citizen would ever even suspect. Crazy people who just wander down the street and break into random houses for no good reason and assault people for no good reason or steal cars for no real good reason – THAT kind of crazy. They are out there. More than you know. Mostly because your local media and press do not publish everything that every police officer responds to. If they did, and if you saw just exactly what is going on near where you live, you'd be amazed. For example, newspapers don't report suicides. Do you know how many people have killed themselves in your city or town or county in the past year? I can guarantee it's way, way more than you'd guess.




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FOR SPECIAL OLYMPICS

Staff photo by Steve Zugschwerdt

TIP A COP: *Nick Hoke, the Poulsbo DARE officer, brings out drinks at the Red Lobster Restaurant in Silverdale Wednesday. Police officers from Bremerton and Poulsbo were serving the public as part of the Tip-a-Cop Special Olympics Fund-raiser. Diners left tips in envelopes for Special Olympics. Suquamish Police will hold their annual Law Enforcement Torch Run and breakfast to benefit Special Olympics on Saturday in con-*

Being a police officer for so long even off duty I could not help but glance down the usual alleys and side streets and parking lots and trails when I was out driving, and because I chased so many running shoplifters that to this day, even off duty, when I see somebody running across a parking lot I am conditioned to get an instant adrenaline hit, like a retired greyhound dog out for a walk that suddenly sees a squirrel running to a tree.

When I sat down in a coffee shop or a deli or fast food place I'd tend to prefer the corner seats so if somebody really weird walked in, I'd see him before he saw me. Google: "2009 Lakewood Shooting."

So I think you get the general idea. Despite all that, I actually never carried a gun off duty for self protection. Or my badge, in a special wallet. I figured I never needed to. And guess what. I was right. On the day I retired, I received a special ID card that proclaimed I was now a Retired Police Officer. I didn't like the photo they had used of me so I slid the card back across the desk and said thank you, but I hate that picture and I don't need a retired police ID card. The HR lady was shocked. "But everybody wants one! You need it to carry a gun, don't you?" I told her that I only had a pistol and a rifle, and since both belonged to the PD I turned them in and I was now an unarmed citizen, with no plans to get a gun of any kind. And so why would I need an ID card that said I was a retired cop? The IT guys who printed the card offered to do another one with any other better picture I had but I never got back to them, because I didn't care enough. Yet another sign that I was more than ready to retire, clearly.

So I'm retired now, off on other adventures that have nothing to do with police work. Shortly after I turned in all my police gear and equipment and passed my patrol car keys off to a newer officer, I realized with some bemusement that I did not miss my old job at all. After about a month, I modified that realization by replacing my wonderment to a more declarative assuredness that I absolutely did not miss any of it. When I saw police action out in public, not even then did I feel even a slight twinge of longing to get back into it; I just looked over at the cops yarding another heroin junkie out of his car in the Walmart parking lot and I thought "Well you guys have fun with that one, and thanks for keeping us safe," and then without a second glance I went on with my business. So at least I wasn't ever beset with doubt or regret, unlike a lot of old timer cops I knew who had to be forced out kicking and screaming after 30, 35, or more years. Those guys couldn't imagine a life outside police work, and some of them were still sad about having to leave for quite some time afterward. Me? Nope. Not at all. I was glad to be done with it, which I guess was a pretty good sign that I was done with it all. I told a fellow officer afterward it was like leaving the military service. We were glad we did it, it was kind of fun sometimes, but no way we would ever want to subject ourselves to that again.

Alright, I'll end this now with the email that I sent to all of the city of Poulsbo employees, on my last day of work:

Aloha everybody!

Way back in 1993 I subjected myself to an extensive applicant testing process to start my career as a police officer here, and I somehow finished with a ranking of #1 over 120 other hopeful candidates. Chief Jeff Doran hired me, and I graduated from the Washington State Criminal Justice Training Commission's Basic Law Enforcement Academy, in class 403. (They're now up to the 800's there!) In the past 27 years, I've seen a lot of changes in Poulsbo, and in policing in general.

In the history of the Poulsbo Police Department, my tenure is a bit above average; only a very few officers here have had, or currently have, longevity like mine. Some folks had suggested that I stay awhile even longer to end my career on nice even number, like "30." Uh.. No. Just…no. If I can count my prior military service then I'm already well over 30 years in uniform. And since I started my career as a servant of the law when I was only 25 years old, my oath to protect and defend the Washington State Constitution as a Poulsbo Police Officer has been in effect now for literally more than half of my life; also a rather distinguishing rare achievement.

I feel like I've made a good enough contribution to society and now I'd like to get myself out of the danger zone before my good luck runs out. I figure the odds only get worse that with each passing year something bad could, would, or will happen to me. Also the cumulative effects of the job demands have taken a toll: I've seen somewhere between enough and too many disturbing crime scenes, bloody car accidents, rotting dead people, selfish criminals, traumatized victims, unsatisfactory plea deals and unprosecuted cases, and I've definitely had more than enough experiences that were ugly, shocking, unpleasant, depressing, and soul-sucking.

I know that despite all that I've been exposed to and endured – or more likely because of it all - I have gained enough insight, perspective and wisdom to develop a personal deep appreciation of life, and living, and the pursuit of happiness. I've known too many cops who stayed in this line of work for too long. Some of them even died shortly after leaving, with not nearly enough years to enjoy their well-deserved retirement. There should be – and there will be for me - much more to life than working at a highly stressful and dangerous job.

I've also seen an alarmingly high number of my peers who got injured, or physically worn down, or mentally damaged from this line of work. Many of them have had experiences that will haunt them for their rest of their lives. And I've seen too many good cops just self-destruct, in a wide variety of unfortunate ways and means. So like I said, I don't want to push my luck anymore; I'm out. I'll be eternally grateful and proud that I was able to honorably finish my career on a date of my own choosing, planned well in advance; also a pretty rare event for PPD officers. In my case, made possible by just a bit of skill and a lot of luck.

To my brother and sister officers and other city of Poulsbo employees, I have enjoyed working for and with just about all of you and some of you I'll miss considerably, and probably think about too much. I want to thank you all for the opportunities, challenges, experiences, growth, support and friendships over the years. To my long-suffering coworkers especially who have had to put up with me and my never-ending shenanigans and wide variety of poor decisions, I readily acknowledge and recognize that you all have had to endure much more from me than you deserve, and I thank you for your saintly high levels of patience, tolerance, and forgiveness.

My police badge is now going into a small display shadow box, and all of the PPD patrol officers ranking below me now get to deservedly each move up one spot on the seniority scale.

I'm also quite pleased to report that yes, it certainly does feel like a great weight has been lifted off of me - there was just a ridiculously long list of unpleasant things that I had to worry about and deal with.

As for my future plans for my next chapter in life: Although the great Pacific Northwest is a swell place to live, Susan and I have had just enough of the fall and winter months that seem to have way too many days that are short, dark, gray, cloudy, sunless, gloomy, dreary, foggy, drizzly, wet, and cold. So we're selling our house and moving to Hawaii.

We've embraced the philosophy of simplification and minimalization enough to renounce excessive materialism and consumerism and be quite satisfied with much less, which is how we plan to happily and successfully live in our small condo in Maalaea, Maui, which is in our name already and waiting for us. Our electric car and two motorcycles will take a boat and meet us there soon, and we have our one-way plane tickets also taken care of. First Class, because reasons. We're also taking along our tubby tabby Pushy Cat and the old Skittish Shedder.

What will I do for a living in the future? I'm going to enjoy living my life, that's what I'm going to do for a living. For money, I'll get a new job - tbd- that is not related to law enforcement in any way, shape, or form. Something that doesn't involving wearing 21 pounds of tactical gear and kevlar and weapons and spare ammunition. Something safer. Pleasant, even. Something that has less than five supervisors. I especially look forward to a new job that doesn't have a policy manual that is literally over 600 pages long. A job where my clients will be happy to see me. A job where I won't have to yell at people, or tackle criminals. Where I can get off work on time and not get called in to start a 14 hour shift at 3 am. On a holiday weekend. Or on a birthday. I could easily go on and on but we all know how difficult policing is, especially in this day and age..

And speaking of policy manuals; to celebrate my contractual release, my copy will be coming me with to a ceremonial beach bonfire in Hansville before I go. I'll also be tossing in some representative Daily Training Bulletins, blank Use of Force forms, Search Warrant and Probable Cause Templates, my login passwords, and some other blank police forms and paperwork that I'll never have the burden of being beholden to again. I'd love to throw in my bodycam too, but they made me turn that back in for a new officer to use. Fine; he can have it.

In closing, it was a privilege and an honor for me to be able to serve my community here, and I will cherish and appreciate my years of service and good experiences. To my fellow officers, I wish you all the very best good luck and fortune and I hope you all can stay safe and make it home to your loved ones at the end of every shift, and retire with your reputation, sanity, and health intact.

Mahalo and Aloha, (now former) City of Poulsbo employee #37 Nick Hoke

